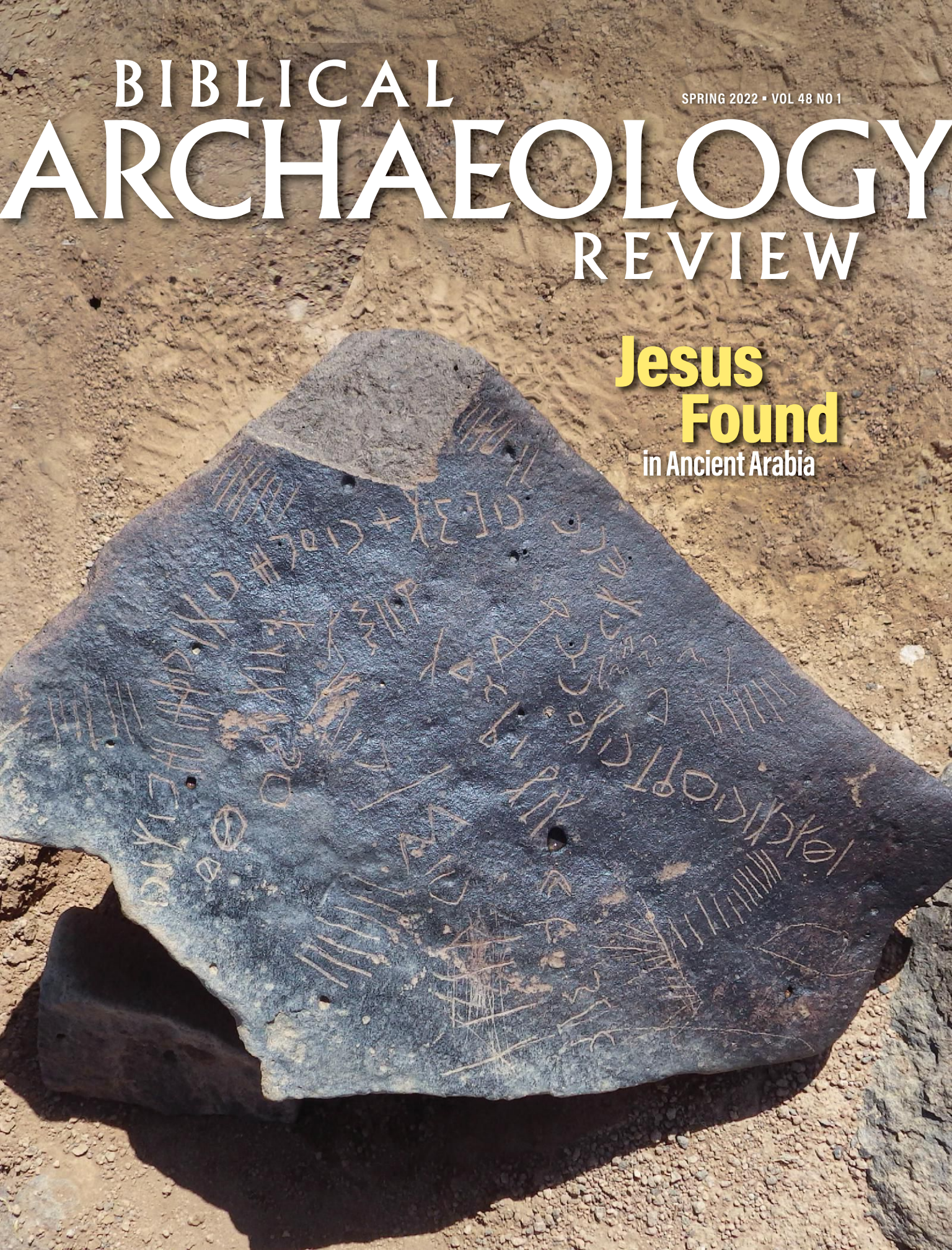
BIBLICAL
ARCHAEOLOGY
REVIEW

SPRING 2022 • VOL 48 NO 1

Jesus Found
in Ancient Arabia



Study Biblical Contexts with Jerusalem University College

IN THE LAND

Short-Term Programs: Spend 2-3 full weeks engaging the Holy Land while gaining new tools and perspectives that will forever change the way you read, study, and teach the Bible.

1 4-Day Programs starting at $2,650

ONLINE

Summer Institute Online: Meet in the summer months for an abbreviated online study experience. Engage in exclusive academic lectures from JUC scholars within a live online platform. Register today for studies from May 16 to June 27, 2022.

Summer Institute Studies starting at $159

JERUSALEM UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

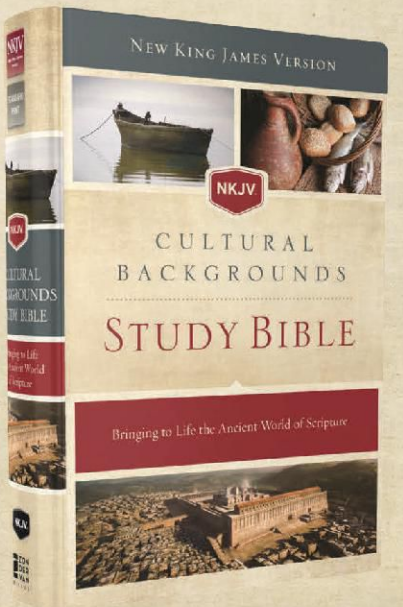
www.juc.edu

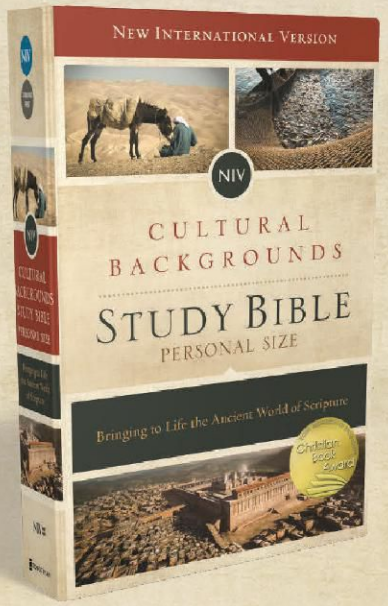
CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS

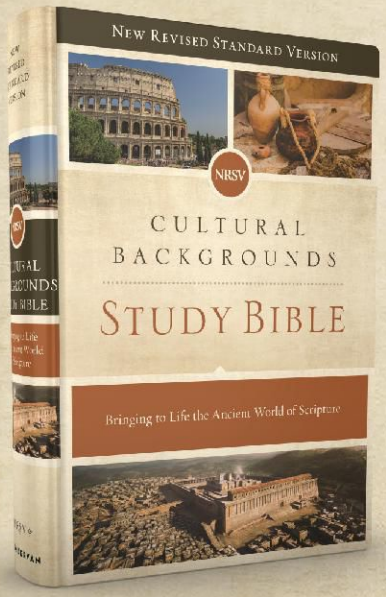
STUDY BIBLE

CONTEXT CHANGES EVERYTHING

AVAILABLE IN A VARIETY OF
TRANSLATIONS & BINDINGS







NKJV

NIV

NRSV

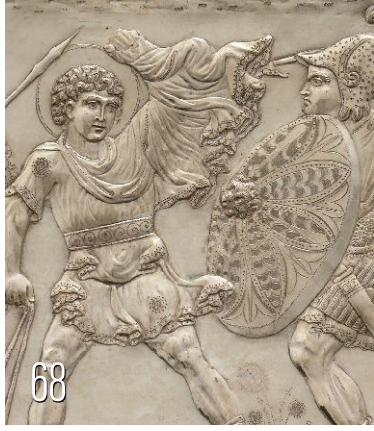
ZONDERVAN®

BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY REVIEW
VOL. 48 NO. 1
SPRING 2022

ON THE COVER: This inscribed stone found deep in the basalt desert of northeastern Jordan invokes the name of Jesus and may provide the earliest evidence for Christian belief in Arabia.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE BADIA EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY PROJECT

FEATURES



STRATA

EPISTLES

PLUS

WEB EXCLUSIVE

Dig the Biblical World

biblicalarchaeology.org/digs

Your favorite digs are accepting volunteers for the summer 2022 season. Check out our digs page to get information on each site, including biblical connections, past finds and discoveries, goals for the upcoming season, and how to volunteer. The experience of a lifetime is just a click away!

COURTESY OF TEL ABEL BETH MAACAH EXCAVATIONS

STAY CONNECTED

There's something new from BAS all the time on *Bible History Daily*. Visit **biblicalarchaeology.org/blog** for the latest news, reviews, and more.

@BibArch Facebook/BibArch

A Season to Refresh, Renew, and Reflect

SPRING IS THE PERFECT TIME TO REFRESH AND RENEW, a chance to embrace new challenges and ideas and turn from the past toward new horizons. Of course, it is also when we observe and celebrate two cherished religious traditions, Passover and Easter, both of which have their origins deep in the biblical past. For our Spring 2022 issue, we've brought together a fascinating array of articles that provide both fresh outlooks on old questions and insightful reflection on the history behind the season's holidays.

In the article "Piece by Piece: Exploring the Origins of the Philistines," archaeologist Daniel Master examines the background to one of biblical archaeology's most debated origins questions and presents new DNA evidence from Philistine Ashkelon that may settle the issue once and for all. Similarly, in "Jesus in Arabia," scholar Ahmad Al-Jallad highlights an extraordinary new inscription that may not only offer the earliest evidence of Christian worship in the Arabian Peninsula but also indicate the Arabian adoption of monotheism centuries before Islam.

"Proof Positive: How We Used Math to Find Herod's Palace at Banias," by Frankie Snyder and Rachel Bar-Nathan, takes a fresh look at long-forgotten flooring pieces excavated at the beautiful Roman site of Banias near Mt. Hermon. Using geometry, they provide an ingenious reconstruction of the floor's design, which they propose once decorated a lost palace of King Herod the Great. And in the Biblical Archaeology 101 piece "Storage and Staples in Biblical Israel," Tim Frank illustrates how, when studied in context, even ancient storage jars—the mundane Tupperware of their day—can open up new vistas on everyday life in biblical times.

The Spring issue also allows us to look forward to the upcoming summer dig season. In Strata, you'll find a listing of scheduled digs for Israel and Jordan, as well as reflections from dig directors on how the pandemic has changed archaeological work both in and out of the field. In addition, anthropologist Allison Mickel reminds us of the critical but often underappreciated role that local laborers play in archaeological projects, while Yossi Garfinkel highlights two new inscriptions from ancient Israel, one of which might preserve the name of a biblical judge.

In Epistles, we explore the historical and biblical context for the sacred events at the heart of the season's religious traditions. Barry Beitzel considers the biblical evidence for the location of the Red Sea, where the Israelites finally escaped the clutches of their Egyptian taskmasters, and Ben Witherington III reflects on the apostle Paul's understanding of Jesus's resurrection found in 1 Corinthians 15, the earliest discussion of the resurrection in the New Testament.

Our Spring issue also offers an opportunity to introduce the members of **BAR**'s new Editorial Advisory Board, who are listed in the masthead at right. The advisory board includes leading scholars and experts in the many fields covered by the magazine, and we look forward to gaining from each member's advice and counsel in the years ahead.

Finally, on p. 11 we note the passing of our longtime colleague and former Managing Editor Sue Singer, who had a formative role in **BAR**'s founding and early success.

Until next time, my friends.

—GLENN J. CORBETT

BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY REVIEW

EDITOR: Glenn J. Corbett
MANAGING EDITOR: Megan Sauter
ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Marek Dospěl
ASSISTANT EDITOR: Nathan Steinmeyer
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS: John G. Drummond, John Merrill, Suzanne F. Singer, Sarah K. Yeomans
DESIGN DIRECTOR: Rob Sugar, AURAS Design
DESIGN: David Fox, AURAS Design
FOUNDING EDITOR: Hershel Shanks

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD: Karen Britt, Eric Cline, Katia Cytryn-Silverman, Jennie Ebeling, Mark Goodacre, Ronald Hendel, Andrew Lawler, Jodi Magness, Christopher Rollston, Sandra Scham, James R. Strange

Articles and the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily represent the view of any member of the Editorial Advisory Board or of any particular editor. Advertising in *Biblical Archaeology Review* does not imply endorsement.

A NOTE ON STYLE: B.C.E. (Before the Common Era) and C.E. (Common Era), used by some of our authors, are the alternative designations often used in scholarly literature for B.C. and A.D.

PUBLISHER: Susan Laden
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER: Jonathan Laden
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT: Janet Bowman
PRODUCTION MANAGER: Heather Metzger
CIRCULATION MANAGER: Jennifer Drummond
DIGITAL CONTENT PRODUCER: Michele-Lee Barasso
TRAVEL/STUDY MANAGER: Alicia Bregon
ADVERTISING CONSULTANT: Michael Monheit
ADVERTISING:
Heather Metzger
202-364-3300 x236
hmetzger@bib-arch.org
Rob Ambrose
503-874-0570
rob@digital2church.com

SUBSCRIPTION QUESTIONS: P.O. Box 37828, Boone, IA 50037-0828 or 1-800-678-5555 for Domestic, 1-515-243-3273 for International

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40915523.

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO: P.O. Box 503, RPO West Beaver Creek, Richmond Hill, ON L4B 4R6

EDITORIAL AND BUSINESS OFFICE:
5614 Connecticut Ave NW #343, Washington DC 20015; (202) 364-3300; bas@bib-arch.org; www.biblicalarchaeology.org

The Biblical Archaeology Society, publisher of *Biblical Archaeology Review* (ISSN-0098-9444), is a nonprofit, nondenominational, educational, and charitable organization, recognized by the government under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The Biblical Archaeology Society uses subscription money to further its educational mission. It does not issue subscription refunds for less than $10. Contributions are tax deductible.

Biblical Archaeology Review is published quarterly by the Biblical Archaeology Society. Subscription price is $47.80 per year. Copyright 2022 by the Biblical Archaeology Society. Printed in the U.S.A. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *Biblical Archaeology Review*, P.O. Box 37828, Boone, IA 50037-0828.

CIRCULATION STATEMENT 2022:
In the preceding 12 months, 127,800 copies were printed per issue; 133,355 was the average paid print and electronic circulation; 500 was the free distribution; 133,855 was the average number of print and electronic copies distributed. For the last issue before filing, total copies printed: 129,331; total paid circulation: 134,978; free copies: 500; total distribution: 135,478. Average paid: 99.6%.

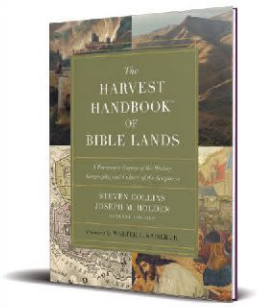
Earn an Accredited MA/PhD in Archaeology & Biblical History

LEARN ON CAMPUS OR AT A DISTANCE

The Veritas International University School of Archaeology, directed by Dr Steven Collins and Dr Brian Janeway, is a **TRACS accredited** Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy program in which world renowned faculty inspire the next generation of archaeologists to understand the people, places, and events of the Bible.

Through **research, exploration, and excavation** we take a hands-on approach. Students and faculty alike contribute to archaeological and biblical scholarship as they discover the organic cause-and-effect relationships between biblical and ancient Near Eastern history.

Fieldwork at the remarkable site of Tall el-Hammam (biblical Sodom) in Jordan will enhance your educational experience. **Digging down will raise your Bible teaching to new heights!**



NEW RELEASE
FROM OUR FACULTY

The Harvest Handbook of Bible Lands

General Editors:
Steven Collins,
Director, VIU School of Archaeology and
Joseph M. Holden,
President, Veritas International University

VIU
VERITAS
International University

SCHOOL OF ARCHAEOLOGY
SANTA ANA, CALIFORNIA · ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

VES.EDU
714.966.8500

Thank you for sharing your thoughts and comments about our Fall 2021 issue. We appreciate your feedback. Here are a few of the letters we received. Find more online at **biblicalarchaeology.org/letters.**

Thankful and Gratified

I HAVE BEEN READING **BAR** since the 1970s, before there were color pictures and a slick, glossy cover. For me, **BAR** has been a way to stay connected with the lands of the Bible. What I have appreciated most about **BAR** is that it provides current information about excavations and new discoveries. This has informed my teaching of the Bible by providing the historical, geographical, cultural, and archaeological background of the ancient Near East.

I was saddened by the passing of **BAR**'s founder and editor, Hershel Shanks, but am thankful and gratified that the vision and tradition of **BAR** continues today.

J. CARL LANEY
RETIRED PROFESSOR OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE
WESTERN SEMINARY
PORTLAND, OREGON

CONGRATULATIONS on a fascinating issue, which included an illuminating, multi-article thread related to the Canaanite Hyksos kings of Egypt: A news story in Strata described early alphabetic writing found at Lachish (Canaanite adaptations of Egyptian hieroglyphs dating to the Hyksos), and then Rachel Hallote's article about Joseph in Egypt presented the "No-Date Theory" that the Hyksos expulsion from Egypt (c. 1550 B.C.E.) was the kernel of the Exodus story! No other magazine offers its readers such intriguing speculations. Bravo!

KENNEDY GAMMAGE
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

Write us at letters@bib-arch.org or **BAR** Editorial, 5614 Connecticut Ave NW #343, Washington, DC 20015. Please include your full name, city, and state. While we welcome all reader comments, we are unable to reply to or publish every letter we receive. Published letters may be edited for clarity and readability.

Do a Better Job!

IN THE FALL 2021 ISSUE, Editor Glenn Corbett introduces the new "Digging In" feature, designed to highlight "exciting new discoveries, insights, and scholarship." He goes on to propose that Rachel Hallote's article "investigates evidence for the Hyksos in ancient Egypt that may shed light on the historical reality of the biblical stories of Joseph and the Exodus."

Really? Maybe you have dismissed the idea that the Bible has any historical reality. Maybe you have substituted your reality with undeliberate notions. In any case, your logic doesn't add up. I take the position that the Bible stands as written and does not need to be allegorized or modified to conform to archaeology or recorded history.

Might I suggest that **BAR** publish articles that actually contain such investigation and evidence instead of Hallote's brand of convenient subjective conjecture posing as scholarship? Please avoid confusing actual archaeology with self-serving mythology. That approach will eventually reduce your publication to the irrelevant.

DAN LIGHT
AURORA, COLORADO

WHILE I REMAIN A DEVOTED FAN of **BAR**, I was surprised to read "unprovenienced" artifacts instead of "unprovenanced," in the Fall 2021 issue (pp. 58–59). I think Hershel Shanks would have demanded better copy editing for his readers.

MARVIN CROPSEY
LEBANON, TENNESSEE

Admittedly, choosing between "unprovenienced" and "unprovenanced" is a bit tricky. First, unprovenienced was the preferred term of the scholars we interviewed, which relates specifically to objects that lack a secure archaeological context. This formally distinguishes it from unprovenanced, which means an object (usually from a collection) that lacks a documented origin or ownership history. In practice, however, both terms are often used interchangeably.—**G.J.C.**

Joseph in Egypt

I WAS DISAPPOINTED that the Joseph article did not provide an answer to the question in its title, "Does Archaeology Confirm Joseph's Time in Egypt?" (Fall 2021). The archaeological evidence presented was used to support the hypothesis that the Hyksos were Canaanites in Egypt and not that Joseph himself was ever there. Hallote further makes a faulty, baseless assumption that Joseph's family practiced the traditions of the Canaanites. However, Joseph was descended from the tribe of Shem,

JOIN

THE MOST EXCLUSIVE TOURS OF EGYPT EVER OFFERED

WITH THE WORLD'S MOST EMINENT ARCHAEOLOGISTS

"No one can tour Egypt like they do"
Dr. Zahi Hawass
WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS ARCHAEOLOGIST

"The best company to visit Egypt with"
Dr. Jehan Sadat
LATE FIRST LADY OF EGYPT

"You will never forget these tours"
Dr. Mostafa Waziri
EGYPT'S HEAD OF ANTIQUITIES

EGYPT TRAVEL COLLECTION 2022/2023

Discover the Land of the Pharaohs with the world's most famous archaeologist, **Dr. Zahi Hawass**, and Egypt's Head of Antiquities, **Dr. Mostafa Waziri**. Enrich your experience by meeting with renowned scholars, museum directors, high-profile ministers, and even members of a former president's family.

You will have unparalleled access to Egypt's greatest monuments. Imagine having the Great Pyramid to yourself or standing between the paws of the Great Sphinx. Enjoy a VIP tour of the Grand Egyptian Museum and a private visit to the Valley of the Kings. These and other experiences typically reserved for VIPs are now within your reach.

DON'T JUST VISIT EGYPT – EXPERIENCE IT!
WITH ARCHAEOLOGICAL PATHS IT IS POSSIBLE.

TOUR DATES AND MORE INFORMATION:
www.archaeologicalpaths.com
contact@archaeologicalpaths.com 917-724-2772

TOURS STARTING AT
$5,985

ARCHAEOLOGICAL PATHS

while the Canaanites were descended from the tribe of Canaan.

STEVE SMITH
ANDERSON, INDIANA

I WAS STRUCK—as if by a lightning bolt from the storm god Yahweh—by the Egyptian royal names Kamose and Ahmose. Is it possible that the name Mose (Moses) comes from these kings?

DAVID WEISMAN
OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

RACHEL HALLOTE RESPONDS:

You are on the right track—many Egyptian names, including Kamose, Ahmose, Ramose, and Thutmose, contain the Egyptian word ms, *which means "to give birth" or "child (of)." This word often features in theophoric names, such as Thutmose ("Thoth is born") and Ramose ("child of Ra"). There are even a few cases where "Mose" appears in Egyptian texts as a name on its own, likely as an abbreviation. Moses of the Bible seems to be one of these abbreviated versions. (See Ogden Goelet, "Moses' Egyptian Name,"* Bible Review, *June 2003.)*

I NOTICED what seems to be a mix-up. Hallote writes, "The graves at Avaris were constructed from mudbrick, as was typical in Canaan, but unlike the stone tomb construction found in Egypt" (p. 44). Shouldn't it say that stone tombs were typical in Canaan (where Israelites were buried in caves), and mudbrick construction was found in Egypt, where the enslaved Israelites had to make bricks from mud and straw?

PAM PRICHARD
LOS ALAMOS, NEW MEXICO

RACHEL HALLOTE RESPONDS:

Although the people of Bronze Age Canaan sometimes buried their dead in tombs ("caves") dug into the living rock, they just as often cut pits into the earth that they lined with stones or mudbricks—or left unlined. These burials were egalitarian in nature, making it difficult to distinguish tombs of Canaanite rulers from others. This is in contrast with the massive stone and stone-cut tombs common for Egyptian royalty in the periods both before and after the time of the Hyksos.

New Canaanite Temple

I ENJOYED READING about the recent discovery of the Northeast Temple at Lachish ("Canaanite Worship at Lachish," Fall 2021). I would argue, however, that the two corroded figurines found there are none other than Baal and his companion and consort, Anat.

Two almost identical figurines come from Middle Bronze Age Tartus in Syria and are now in the Louvre. They similarly have pegs attached to their feet. The female figurine is dressed for battle; she has a bow and arrows strapped to her chest, is holding a sword in her right hand and an ax in her other, raised hand. The male figurine can be identified as the storm god Baal, wearing his peculiar head ornament.

It is not a coincidence that a bronze ax head with a representation of a bird (denoting femininity) was found in the Holy of Holies. Baal typically had a standing stone (*massebah*) erected on his behalf, and there

THE TURTLE OF WISDOM AND GOOD LUCK

DANIEL STEIGER

Larimar Turtle Pendant

60% Off Original Price With Promo Code Below

Natural Stone Larimar

Our stunning summertide turtle pendant is fashioned into a turtle of Saona Island in the Dominican Republic.

The Dominican Republic is home to one of the most unique and beautiful stones in the World. Every stone of gorgeous blue Larimar shows color variation, meaning each piece is one of a kind.

Larimar is said to enlighten and heal in a physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual way; facilitating inner wisdom and outer manifestation.

It represents peace and clarity, radiating positive energy ... It is said to be a healing stone. Only found in the Dominican Republic, this rare stone has been fashioned into the body of our Saona Island turtle.

Set into finest sterling silver and plated in rose gold, this lovely piece is the perfect gift to look forward to better times ahead. Originally priced at $249.

Take advantage of this truly spectacular introductory offer.

• Rare Larimar Gemstone • Sparkling White Accents • Complimentary 18"+2" Chain
• Solid 925 Sterling Silver • Warm Rose Gold Plating

Original Price Without Promo Code ~~$249~~ With Promo Code $99 plus S&H

ORDER NOW TOLL FREE 24/7 ON 1-800 733 8463
AND QUOTE PROMO CODE: BR22ST

Or order online at timepiecesusa.com/br22st and enter promo code BR22ST

Timepieces International Inc, 10701 NW 140th Street, Suite 1, Hialeah Gardens, Florida, 33018

apparently were two stones in the main hall at Lachish. I therefore suggest that the temple was built for the worship of the two deities.

MORGAN PARIS
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

ITAMAR WEISSBEIN RESPONDS:
Indeed, figurines of goddesses in a "smiting" pose do appear in the Late Bronze Age Levant. However, they are extremely rare. The few smiting goddess figurines are sometimes naked but more commonly wear long dresses that cover their legs and an upper body that has noticeable breasts. In some cases, they have long hair, like the Egyptian goddess Hathor. They are usually depicted standing or stepping forward, but never in a pronounced marching position like the male figurines.

In contrast, the figurines from Lachish are in a marching pose, they wear short kilts, and seem to have short hair and no noticeable breasts. Therefore, they are both examples of the "smiting god" figurines so common to the period.

Jesus on Bathing

MATTHEW THIESSEN'S ARTICLE "Jesus and Ritual Impurity" (Fall 2021) is very insightful. May I suggest that John 13:6–11 signifies the acceptance and approval of ritual bathing? Peter does not want Jesus to wash his feet. When he changes his mind and enthusiastically wants his hands and head also to be washed, Jesus says that those who have bathed need only their feet washed because they are already clean. For Christians, of course, this has always symbolized the greatest purification in baptism.

PETER J. GAFFNEY
SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA

Archaeology Debate

IN "BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY FOR THE PEOPLE" (Fall 2021), Eric Cline mentioned that unprovenienced artifacts should not be published and that such objects, because they are either looted or forged, have lost 90 percent of the information that makes them useful to scholars. I wonder what he thinks about the Dead Sea Scrolls, which were "looted" by non-archaeologists and, by ending up on the antiquities market, were saved from destruction.

E.J. NEIBURGER
WAUKEGAN, ILLINOIS

ERIC CLINE RESPONDS:
The Dead Sea Scrolls are the exception that proves the rule. Although the first manuscripts were looted, and the discovery of the caves was split between archaeologists and looters, in pretty much every case we know where the scrolls came from and their context—especially with those which later came from systematically excavated caves. Those scrolls without known context, such as the ones that appeared on the market in recent years, have turned out to be forgeries, in basically every instance.

MILESTONE

Suzanne F. Singer (1935–2022)

EVEN THOUGH it has been more than two decades since Suzanne (Sue) Singer left her daily role as Managing Editor of **BAR**, her influence on the magazine still reverberates in every issue. Her death on January 2 at the age of 86 marked a significant loss for the magazine but also an opportunity to remember her critical role in its founding and success.

Although Sue had attended the Bronx High School of Science, Swarthmore College, and Columbia University, earning degrees in chemistry and teaching, she found her real voice at the fledgling *Biblical Archaeology Review* and at *Moment*, a magazine focused on modern Jewish life. Her experiences during her four-year stay in Jerusalem in the 1970s, where she, her husband Max, and their young children explored Israel's ancient history and culture, prepared her to write enthusiastically about biblical archaeology.

Hershel Shanks and Suzanne Singer.

She was involved with **BAR** from the start. **BAR**'s founder and late editor, Hershel Shanks, initially asked her to be his Jerusalem Correspondent and then Managing Editor, after she and Max returned to Washington, D.C., in 1977. Hershel recognized how vital Sue was in growing his quixotic journal into the professional operation it became. He often described her as his "indispensable right arm."

Her teaching degree and, maybe more significantly, her parenting skills raising her four rambunctious boys were ideal training for her role at **BAR**—and the entire publishing arm of the Biblical Archaeology Society (BAS). She was a quiet yet powerful force, guided by her own strong, inquisitive intellect. A balance was established in which Hershel's often mischievous editorial style and Sue's sensible nature and diplomatic skills formed the basis for a successful working environment. Even as the staff grew, Sue's specialty was keeping everyone engaged and moving each issue forward.

While **BAR** has matured, the vibe has always been that of a family, maybe influenced by the fact that at first the editorial staff worked in Sue's house. We squabbled, complained, laughed, worked lots of overtime, and gradually coalesced into a dedicated workgroup, largely due to Sue's influence.

That's why, in 1987, when the Singers' son Alex was killed on duty with the Israeli army, the event reverberated so traumatically among the BAS family. Sue and Max could have been unmoored by this tragedy, but they turned it into an opportunity to celebrate Alex's life and dedication to his adopted country. They created a book from his journals and drawings, finding some grace from sharing his life with others.

Sue and Max left the U.S. in 1998 and followed their sons to Israel where they lived the rest of their lives among their sons and grandchildren. Sue continued to contribute to **BAR** for many more years, helping grow **BAR** while retaining the intimacy that, even today, makes it a publication with a special mission.—**SUSAN LADEN and ROB SUGAR**

YESHU DRAY

Bethsaida and the Church of the Apostles

EXTREME MAKEOVER. This dedicatory inscription from the Byzantine basilica at El-Araj speaks of renovations financed by an unnamed bishop.

IN 2017, EXCAVATORS AT EL-ARAJ uncovered a Byzantine basilica. Could this be the lost Church of the Apostles, described by early pilgrims as a church commemorating the home of Peter and Andrew?

Located along the northern shores of the Sea of Galilee, El-Araj is one of two sites proposed as biblical Bethsaida, the other being nearby Et-Tell.* In the Bible, the village is famously the home of the apostles Peter, Andrew, and Philip (John 1:44). However, Bethsaida was abandoned in the fourth century, and was not mentioned again until an eighth-century Bavarian bishop traveled to the Church of the Apostles that was said to be built atop the site's ruins. Over the past century, scholars have tried repeatedly to locate biblical Bethsaida and the Church of the Apostles. Recent discoveries suggest El-Araj may indeed be the site of both.

Since the start of the excavations, the team has found gilded glass tesserae, which appear in ornate churches of the Byzantine period. During the 2019 season, the team discovered the remains of elaborate mosaic floors. In 2021, more of the church's mosaic was uncovered, along with walls that indicate the building measured approximately 88 by 52 feet. The team also found two fragmentary inscriptions, one mentioning the construction of the basilica and the other referencing major renovations carried out on the church.

The large Byzantine basilica, built atop the remains of a Roman-era fishing village from around the time of Jesus, went out of use in the eighth century when a large earthquake devastated much of the region. Excavators thus argue that the material remains at El-Araj best match the historical descriptions of Bethsaida and the Church of the Apostles.

Although the debate about the location of biblical Bethsaida will surely continue, it seems that one point may be resolved: The Church of the Apostles—part of Byzantine Bethsaida—has likely been found at El-Araj!

* See R. Steven Notley and Mordechai Aviam, "Searching for Bethsaida: The Case for El-Araj," **BAR**, Spring 2020; Rami Arav, "Searching for Bethsaida: The Case for Et-Tell," **BAR**, Spring 2020.

HOW MANY?

How many pyramids are there at Giza in Egypt?

ANSWER ON P. 24

Sorceress Toolkit

COURTESY OF PARCO ARCHEOLOGICO DI POMPEII

FAMOUSLY BURIED by the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in 79 C.E., Pompeii was frozen in time until its rediscovery in the 18th century. Since then, archaeologists have periodically excavated the site.

Recent excavations led by the Archaeological Park of Pompeii—the organization tasked with preserving Pompeii and its environs—unearthed some fascinating equipment: a sorceress's toolkit. Scholars believe sorceresses would have served their clients in Pompeii by telling fortunes, divining pregnancies, conducting fertility rites, and warding off bad luck. The kit contained around 100 objects—everything a sorceress would have needed to perform her duties—including buttons, bells, scarab beetles, tiny model skulls and fists, amber, carnelian, and bronze decorative objects, figurines of men and satyrs, and miniature phallic amulets.

The toolkit was discovered in a luxurious villa dubbed the Garden House. In another room there were ten victims of the eruption, all women and children. Archaeologists plan to use DNA analysis to determine if the women and children were related. It's possible the toolkit belonged to one of these victims. The assemblage did not contain any precious stones or gold objects, which might suggest that its owner was a woman of low status, perhaps even a slave, potentially someone who did not have the means to escape the eruption and perished in the villa alongside the rest of the household.

The toolkit will soon be on display in the Palestra Grande at Pompeii.

COURTESY OF SOTHEBY'S

Pricey Prayers

A MEDIEVAL JEWISH PRAYER BOOK sold for $8.3 million in October 2021. This set a new record: The Luzzatto Mahzor can now claim the highest price tag of any Hebrew manuscript purchased to date. With lavish illustrations and embellishments, the prayer book (or *mahzor*) is a feast for the eyes—even depicting mythological creatures—and for the soul. It includes the liturgy for two Jewish holidays: Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

The prayer book was created in the 13th or 14th century by a scribe named Abraham for the Jewish community in Bavaria. Later, it entered the collection of Samuel David Luzzatto, a 19th-century Italian Jewish scholar and poet, and then the Universal Israelite Alliance, a Paris-based Jewish organization. Although the recent purchaser of the manuscript remains anonymous, the individual is an American, meaning that the manuscript has left Europe and now has a new home in the U.S.

DEFINE INTERVENTION

opus sectile

1. A type of wall and floor decoration
2. A ritual of stamping sacred cakes
3. A type of crown worn by Byzantine emperors
4. A Roman dish of egg, leeks, and saffron

ANSWER ON P. 20

Unsilencing the Archives

ONLINE EXHIBIT

Badè Museum of Biblical Archaeology
Berkeley, California
www.psr.edu/centers/bade-museum

THE VIRTUAL EXHIBITION *Unsilencing the Archives: The Laborers of the Tell en-Nasbeh Excavations (1926–1935)* has been recently launched online by the Badè Museum of Biblical Archaeology. Developed with support from the Palestine Exploration Fund, it portrays the role of local laborers and Egyptian foremen in excavating Tell en-Nasbeh, an archaeological site about 8 miles northwest of Jerusalem in what was British Mandate Palestine.

Local laborers employed at archaeological digs around the Middle East appear only anecdotally in field documentation, dig reports, and publications. Large excavation projects—almost exclusively directed by European or American scholars—have historically hired dozens and hundreds of local men, women, and even children to perform the "unskilled labor" of digging, hauling, and dumping the excavated material. Many seasoned laborers and their foremen developed professional excavation skills and acquired formidable knowledge, yet their important role in the region's archaeology has largely gone unnoticed (see article, p. 18).

To fill in this narrative, the present exhibit showcases unpublished archival documents, photographs, and historical film footage that illustrate the untold stories. The visual material is arranged in five parts with extensive commentary. We learn about individual laborers, as well as their salaries, daily routines, and dig tasks. Other documents illustrate hiring practices and negotiations between the foreign archaeologists and local landholders.

Free, web-based, and open-access, this rich material is accessible to anyone with an internet connection. Related content, including public programming, is available on YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram.

In late 2020, the Badè Museum launched another virtual exhibit centered around the excavations at Tell en-Nasbeh. Titled *Daily Life in an Ancient Judean Town*, this project is built around artifacts excavated by William F. Badè from Tell en-Nasbeh and offers a glimpse into the lifestyles and culture of ancient Judeans during the first millennium B.C.E.

COURTESY OF THE BADÈ MUSEUM, PACIFIC SCHOOL OF RELIGION

Women gathering potsherds from the dump at Tell en-Nasbeh, in 1935.

THEN AND NOW

Acrobats

The desire to be entertained has been a constant throughout human history: to forget the world—if only for a moment—and enjoy something truly wonderful. Acrobats are one of the earliest attested forms of professional entertainers.

The earliest evidence for trained acrobats comes from the ancient city of Ebla in Syria, dating to c. 2320 B.C.E.; they are also mentioned several centuries later in the royal archives at Mari, along the Euphrates. Known as *huppû*, these entertainers performed for the king and the royal court during special events and festivals. There is no documentation for female *huppû*, so it appears the profession was a male-only occupation. The performances were so admired, the *huppû* would even travel with the king on foreign visits.

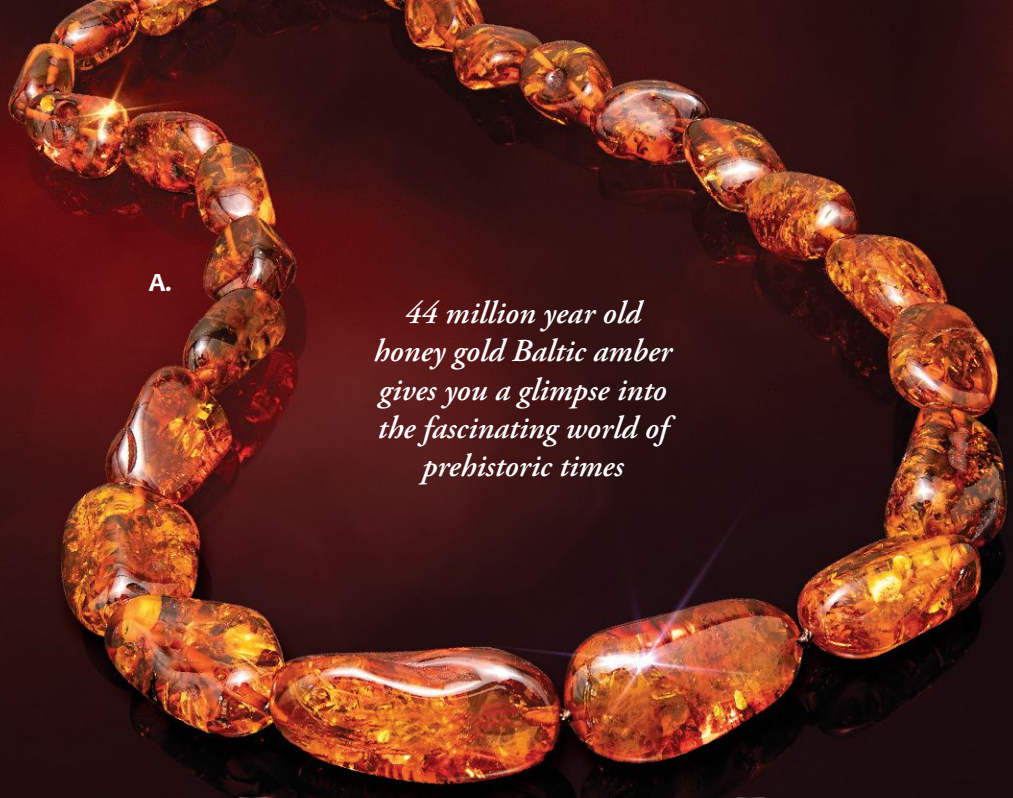
Almost a millennium later, across the Mediterranean on the island of Crete, the Minoans had their own acrobatic tradition. The bull-leaping frescoes from Knossos depict male and female acrobats vaulting over the animal's back. Whether Minoans did this for religious reasons, entertainment, or both, is still debated. Centuries later, the ancient Greeks took a similar interest in acrobats, and, indeed, the word *acrobat* is Greek for "to walk on tiptoe," or "to climb up." Much like their earlier Syrian counterparts, Greek acrobats were considered entertainers and would often perform at weddings, religious festivals, and funerals.*

Even today, this ancient tradition is alive and well. Acrobats, including famous troupes like Cirque du Soleil, perform to sold-out crowds at circuses, parades, and venues across the world. Thousands of years later, acrobats very similar to the *huppû* still amaze and delight.—**J.D.**

PETER EASTLAND/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

A reconstructed fresco from Knossos with acrobatic bull leaping.

* For an example of Greek acrobatic figurines, see "Worldwide," **BAR**, March/April 2014.



44 million year old honey gold Baltic amber gives you a glimpse into the fascinating world of prehistoric times

Get the complete set for only $249 plus Free Shipping with call-in only!*

Prehistoric Perfection

*44 million year old Baltic amber priced at **just $99***

Both in love and in gemstones, it can take a long time to achieve perfection. Just as your relationship has matured and strengthened over the years, so has Baltic amber. This natural gemstone is a scientific phenomenon that contains fossilized plant and animal life that date back over 40 million years. In fact, most of the life-forms found in Baltic amber are now extinct.

Thankfully, the fine art of a great deal is alive and well at Stauer. The amber pieces you see here feature ample carats of amber from the icy Baltic region, famous for containing the world's finest amber deposits. And, adding to the prehistoric mystique is the fact that no two stones are identical— each piece captured something different as it formed, just as every love story is unique.

Now, there are necklaces with generous gems of amber going for nearly $15,000. We think that's barbaric. Which is why we made certain you can bring home 160 total carats of the world's oldest natural gem for **only $99**.

PRAISE FOR STAUER AMBER JEWELRY

★★★★★

"When it arrived I was blown away by it's beauty and uniqueness."
– J. R., Port Angeles, WA

Satisfaction guaranteed or your money back. Revel in the unique beauty of *Cherry Amber* for 30 days. If it fails to delight, send it back for a full refund of the item price.

Limited Reserves. Baltic amber at these prices won't stick around. Call today before this great deal becomes extinct.

Cherry Amber Collection

A. Necklace (160 ctw)	~~$499~~†	$99 + S&P	Save $400
B. Ring (8 ctw)	~~$399~~†	$129 + S&P	Save $270
C. Earrings (15 ctw)	~~$399~~†	$149 + S&P	Save $250
Necklace, Ring & Earrings Set	~~$1297~~	$299 + S&P	Save $998

***Call and ask how to get the set for only $249 with free shipping**

You must use the insider offer code to get our special price.

1-800-333-2045

Your Insider Offer Code: CAC191-02

† Special price only for customers using the offer code versus the price on Stauer.com without your offer code.

"People have been making amber jewelry for over 10,000 years, which could make it the first gem material ever used."
— The International Gem Society (IGS)

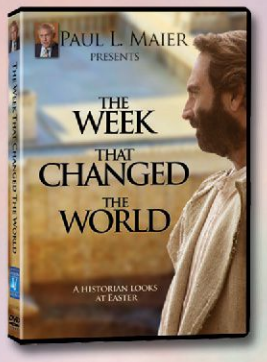
Stauer®
14101 Southcross Drive W., Ste 155, Dept. CAC191-02,
Burnsville, Minnesota 55337 **www.stauer.com**

ACCREDITED BUSINESS
Rating of A+

• 20" Necklace • 160 ctw tumbled Baltic amber • Ring set in yellow gold-finished .925 sterling silver • Ring: whole sizes 5-10

Stauer... *Afford the Extraordinary.*®

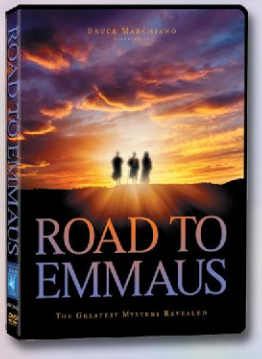
Best-selling DVDs for Easter



The Week that Changed the World

This documentary takes viewers step by step through the events of Holy Week, shedding light on the key players, unravelling the political intrigue, and answering longstanding questions about what happened and why. Professor of ancient history and world-renowned expert Dr. Paul L. Maier details the story, using maps, graphics, and dramatic re-creations to bring Holy Week alive. Docu-drama, 33 minutes.

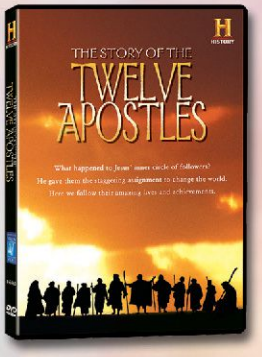
#501638D, $9.99



Road to Emmaus

It's a story that has captivated the imagination of generations. Two first-century travelers, mourning the death of Jesus, were joined by a mysterious stranger. Over the next few hours, the stranger revealed many mysteries hidden in the ancient Scriptures. Soon, the purpose of Jesus' life became clear and the travelers' sadness turned to joy. You can now learn what they learned. Discover the key to life on the Road to Emmaus. Drama, 30 minutes.

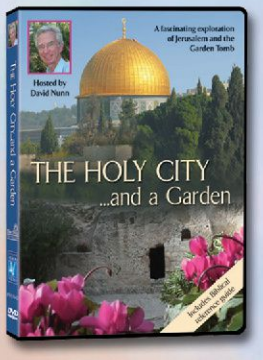
#501354D, $9.99



The Story of the Twelve Apostles

They started out as average, unexceptional men of their time. But their dedication to a prophetic Jewish preacher in the backwaters of the Roman Empire transformed them into revolutionaries and, in the process, changed the world itself in ways that would reverberate across time for two thousand years. Discover the extraordinary, untold stories of the men chosen by Jesus to bring God's plan to the world. Documentary, 100 minutes.

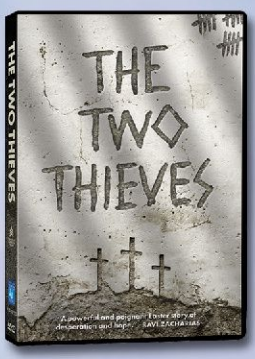
#4656D, $9.99



The Holy City...and a Garden

An upbeat, informative journey through Jerusalem with host David Nunn. Visit some of the Holy City's most intriguing attractions—the Western (Wailing) Wall, the Dome of the Rock, the Garden Tomb—and discover the history behind their triumphant yet turbulent past. It's the next best thing to being there in person to experience these fascinating locations in all their magnificence! Documentary, 23 minutes.

#501364D, $9.99



The Two Thieves

Two thousand years ago, two Jewish prisoners await their fate in a Jerusalem jail cell. One, a lifelong criminal, is resigned to his death. The other, a lifelong rabbinical student and peacemaker, refuses to accept his fate. *The Two Thieves* captures the uncommon grace and redemption of the crucifixion from a perspective that's never before been captured on film. Drama, 27 minutes.

#501625D, $9.99

I Believe in Easter

Discover the origins of Easter in this thoroughly researched and emotionally charged docu-drama. See how culture, emperors, apostles, and popes have influenced how we celebrate Easter today. The program features dramatized scenes from the gospels along with documentary footage shot in the Holy Land and at the Vatican, plus insightful commentary from church scholars and historians. Docu-drama, 50 minutes.

#501608D, $9.99

All 6 for $29.99, #97232D *(plus $7.99 S&H)* **with coupon code BAR0322. Save $30!**

Gateway Films Vision Video

www.VisionVideo.com
Please use coupon code **BAR0322** in the shopping cart.

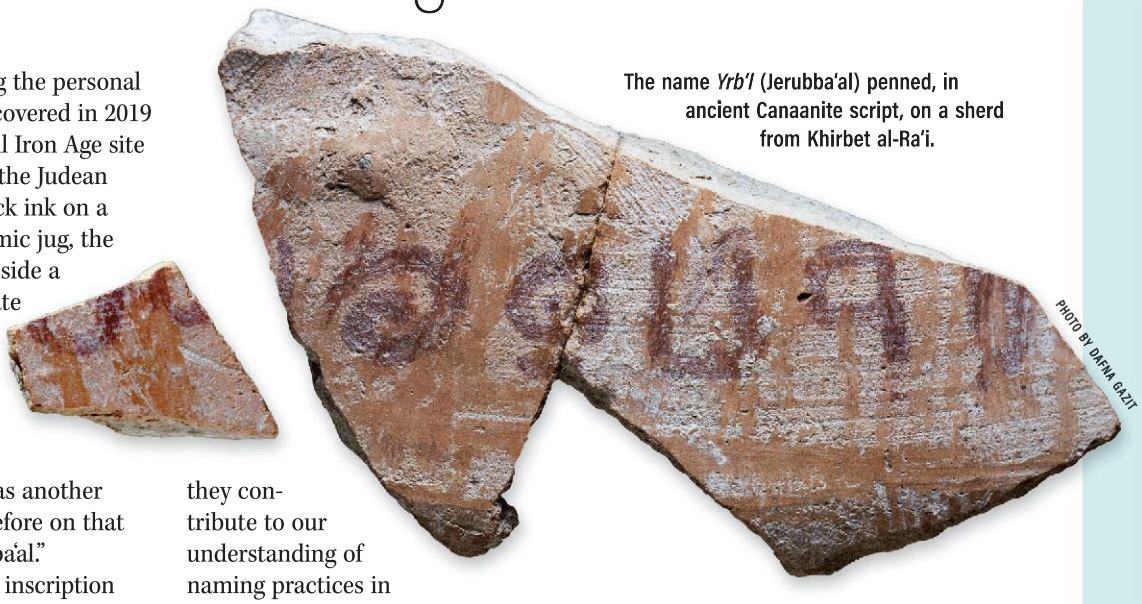
1-800-523-0226
Please mention source code **BAR0322** when ordering.

Vision Video–Dept BAR0322
PO Box 540
Worcester, PA 19490
(include $7.99 S&H)

Prices are good until May 1, 2022. Your satisfaction is guaranteed! All titles are available on RedeemTV.com.

Name of Biblical Judge Surfaces

YOSEF GARFINKEL



The name *Yrb'l* (Jerubba'al) penned, in ancient Canaanite script, on a sherd from Khirbet al-Ra'i.

PHOTO BY DAFNA GAZIT

AN INSCRIPTION bearing the personal name Jerubba'al was uncovered in 2019 at Khirbet al-Ra'i, a small Iron Age site located near Lachish in the Judean Foothills. Written in black ink on a small sherd from a ceramic jug, the inscription was found inside a grain silo dated to the late 12th or early 11th century B.C.E., the time of the biblical judges.[1] The name Jerubba'al appears in the Book of Judges (6:32), where it is given as another name for Gideon: "Therefore on that day he was called Jerubba'al."

A few years earlier, an inscription bearing the name Eshba'al was uncovered at the nearby site of Khirbet Qeiyafa, incised on the shoulder of a storage jar.[2] That inscription, found on a floor of the fortified city thought to be biblical Sha'arayim, dates to the early tenth century B.C.E., the time of King David. The name Eshba'al is also known in the Bible, as the name of the son of Saul who challenged David's kingship (1 Chronicles 8:33; 2 Samuel 2–4).

These are the first occurrences of the names Jerubba'al and Eshba'al in the archaeological record. Taken together with the biblical evidence, they contribute to our understanding of naming practices in Judah during the time of the judges and the formative years of the Judahite kingdom, respectively.

Both names include the element Ba'al, which was the name of the Canaanite storm god. The composite name Jerubba'al means "founded by Ba'al," while the name Eshba'al can be translated as "man of Ba'al." Later biblical writers, however, sometimes replaced the component Ba'al with the word *bosheth* ("shame"): Jerubba'al (as the name of Gideon) appears in the Tanakh as Jerubbesheth ("founded by shame," 2 Samuel 11:21), while Eshba'al became Ish-bosheth ("man of shame," 2 Samuel 2:8). As such, the new inscriptions clarify that there was indeed a process of cleansing pagan elements from names in the Hebrew Bible.

The personal names Jerubba'al and Eshba'al do not appear after the tenth century B.C.E. The correlation between the biblical tradition and the archaeological finds indicates that these were indeed common names only during a specific historical period. It also suggests that personal names mentioned in the Bible were actually used during the periods discussed by the biblical writers.* In the heated debate about how much history is preserved in the Hebrew Bible, the use of such personal names points to authentic memories from as early as the time of the judges.

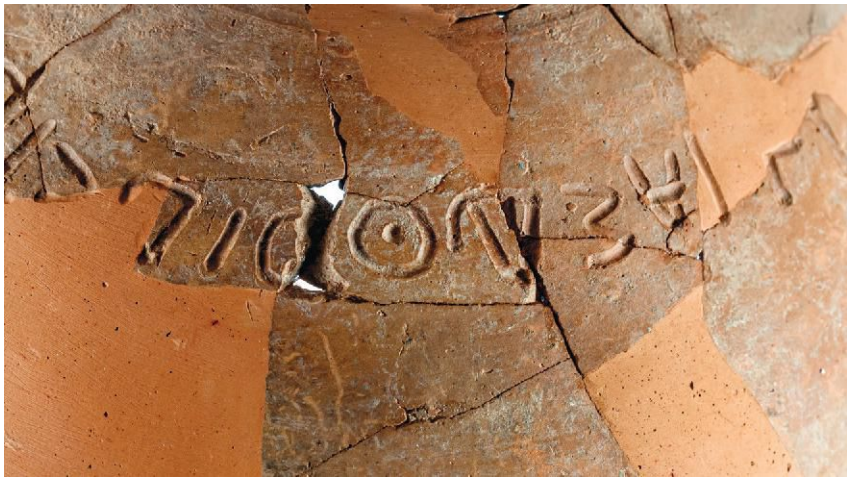


PHOTO BY TAL ROGOVSKY

The name *'sb'l* (Eshba'al) incised, in ancient Canaanite script, on a jar from Khirbet Qeiyafa.

[1] Christopher Rollston, Yosef Garfinkel, Kyle H. Keimer, Gillan Davis, and Saar Ganor, "The Jerubba'al Inscription from Khirbet al-Ra'i: A Proto-Canaanite (Early Alphabetic) Inscription," *Jerusalem Journal of Archaeology* 2 (2021), pp. 1–15.

[2] Yosef Garfinkel, Mitka R. Golub, Haggai Misgav, and Saar Ganor, "The ʾIšbaʿal Inscription from Khirbet Qeiyafa," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 373 (2015), pp. 217–233.

* For more, see Mitka R. Golub, "What's in a Name? Personal Names in Ancient Israel and Judah," **BAR**, Summer 2020.

COURTESY OF ALLISON MICKEL

Silent Labor

Dig Workers in the Middle East

ALLISON MICKEL

LIKE MANY ARCHAEOLOGISTS, I take pride in my excavation skills. I can keep my vertical sections straight, reveal a delicate skeleton, and sort out complex stratigraphy. Of course, on my first excavation, I struggled with these tasks. So that I might learn, my excavation supervisor told me to watch Moses, an excavation worker hired from the local community. As I observed and copied the way Moses held and moved the trowel, I learned how to excavate.

I am not alone in this experience. Seton Lloyd, who later became the president of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq, wrote in the 1960s about his experience at Khorsabad, learning to excavate from the local Sherqati laborers hired to work on the site. Khorsabad is famous for its extremely difficult and sensitive mudbrick architecture. The laborers were not only experts in recognizing and digging around the mudbricks but had even developed their own specialized tools for revealing the mudbricks clearly and carefully.

In the history of Middle Eastern archaeology, there are many examples of local communities such as the Sherqatis, and individuals like Moses, who developed expertise in archaeology by working on project after project. Yet these people are rarely, if ever, credited in archaeological publications for their contributions, and they are generally excluded from the documentation, analysis, and publication of archaeological research. We know about them mostly through affectionate notes in diaries and memoirs, which make it clear that archaeological excavation would not be the same without these locally hired workers.

Of course, excavation management varies across the Middle East. Since the 1940s, archaeological labor in Israel has been done mainly by volunteers, soldiers, and government workers. In other places, students have been the ones to move the most soil. And while the number and scale of foreign-run excavations has decreased, especially in Turkey and Egypt, many excavations across the Middle East still follow the 200-year-old tradition of hiring members of the local community to conduct the manual labor of the archaeological project.

So what skills and knowledge do locally hired laborers contribute to an excavation? In 2014, I set out to answer this question by interviewing former site workers at two major sites: Petra in Jordan and Çatalhöyük in Turkey. In total, I spent five years interviewing more than 150 workers across the two sites. They described their memories of working on excavations—of the heat, the pay, and the relationships they formed with students and researchers. As they shared their recollections, it became clear that they possessed expertise in many aspects of the archaeological process.

Some held detailed and vivid memories of the archaeological finds recovered during excavation. They were able to describe particular architectural fragments, burials, figurines, and coin hoards. In some cases, their memories conveyed more information than the original documentation on the project. One man, for instance, described the

ABOVE: Ismail Al-Bedul at the Temple of the Winged Lions in Petra, Jordan.

Finally . . . a better mobility solution than Scooters or Power Chairs.

The *Zoomer's* versatile design and 1-touch joystick operation brings mobility and independence to those who need it most.

If you have mobility issues, or know someone who does, then you've experienced the difficulties faced by millions of Americans. Simple tasks like getting from the bedroom to the kitchen can become a time-consuming and potentially dangerous ordeal. You may have tried to solve the problem with a power chair or a scooter but neither is ideal. Power chairs are bulky and look like a medical device. Scooters are either unstable or hard to maneuver. Now, there's a better alternative . . . the Zoomer.

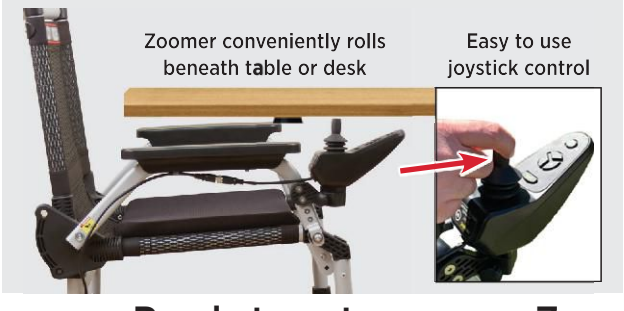
My Zoomer is a delight to ride! *It has increased my mobility in my apartment, my opportunities to enjoy the-out-of-doors, and enabled me to visit the homes of my children for longer periods of time. The various speeds of it match my need for safety, it is easy to turn, and I am most pleased with the freedom of movement it gives me.*

Sincerely, A. Macon, Williamsburg, VA

After just one trip around your home in the Zoomer, you'll marvel at how easy it is to navigate. It is designed to maneuver in tight spaces like doorways, between furniture, and around corners. It can go over thresholds and works great on any kind of floor or carpet. It's not bulky or cumbersome, so it can roll right up to a table or desk – there's no need to transfer to a chair. Its sturdy yet lightweight aluminum frame makes it durable and comfortable. Its dual motors power it at up to 3.7 miles per hour and its automatic electromagnetic brakes stop on a dime. The rechargeable battery powers it for up to 8 miles on a single charge. Plus, its exclusive foldable design enables you to transport it easily and even store it in a closet or under a bed when it's not in use.

Folds to 12" in seconds

Why spend another day letting mobility issues hamper your lifestyle? Call now and find out how you can have your very own Zoomer.



Now available with sporty two-arm lever steering
(Zinger Chair)

Ready to get your own Zoomer? We'd love to talk to you.

Call now toll free and order one today! **1-888-690-0218**

Please mention code 116325 when ordering.

BBB ACCREDITED BUSINESS Rating of A+

85032

appearance and specific location of a bronze statue from the Temple of the Winged Lions in Petra—and offered a hypothesis regarding its original use. The documentation for this object in the project archive, by contrast, is only one line long.

Other site workers possessed significant expertise about excavation methodologies. They were proficient in recognizing stratigraphic changes, even subtle ones. Interviewees described how they knew which tools to use, depending on the soil's color and texture, and density of artifacts. Site workers from Petra described how they knew what pottery came from which era, and one site worker from Çatalhöyük said he could anticipate what would be recovered from the flotation machine simply by looking at a soil sample.

But the moment I commented to site workers that they clearly had expertise, they denied it. "Oh no," said person after person. "I don't know anything about archaeology."

Why would so many site workers claim to know nothing about excavation, even after years of experience working on digs? The memories that they related made it clear that they possessed extensive knowledge and skills relevant to field archaeology. As an archaeologist, I expected that they would want me to know how skilled and informed they were. I was wrong.

As I continued with the interviews, the reason behind the contradiction became clear. In addition to feigning ignorance about archaeology, site workers told me stories about times when they had worked on excavations and offered their expertise to project directors. The site workers had suggested, for instance, other places to dig, different dates for artifacts, or alternative conservation strategies. In response, they were reprimanded or demoted or even fired—in other words, punished, often financially. One man had sworn off ever working on an excavation again, saying that project directors treated him as someone "only there to work, not there to ask."

In my recent book,[1] I call this phenomenon "lucrative non-knowledge." It describes a situation in which it is rewarding monetarily to pretend to be ignorant and where revealing one's scientific expertise can prove costly. Workers across the Middle East have been disincentivized from sharing what they know about sites, artifacts, and excavation procedure. They possess knowledge from living near archaeological remains, from working on excavations for a long time, and from handing information down through generations—but it is risky for them to try to share it with archaeologists. And our knowledge about the past is poorer for it.

Fortunately, there are things that archaeologists can do to change the situation. One way is to involve locally hired laborers in the documentation and analysis stages of the archaeological project. Historically, the manual and the intellectual work of archaeology have been treated as two separate phases, with one person moving the soil and another one documenting its texture and color. Combining the two would acknowledge the expert work entailed in removing, recognizing, sifting, and dumping soil. If site workers participated in documentation, they could include their perspectives and knowledge in the archaeological record and, by extension, the scholarly interpretations.

If archaeologists want to benefit from local community members' insights, we should make it more rewarding for them to share their expertise than to hide it. To do this, we have to change the way we hire and pay site workers on archaeological sites. Specifically, manual labor needs to be treated like other professional work, where team recruitment and pay scales are based on experience. In this way, workers would be rewarded for their expert contributions to the archaeological process, rather than for performing an easygoing, quiet attitude. As a result, archaeology would grow and benefit from the free and open sharing of knowledge that is essential to good science.

[1] *Why Those Who Shovel Are Silent: A History of Local Archaeological Knowledge and Labor* (Louisville, CO: Univ. Press of Colorado, 2021).

DEFINE INTERVENTION (SEE QUIZ ON P. 13)

Answer: 1

Opus sectile, which means "cut work" in Latin, is a type of wall and floor decoration with colored materials cut into particular shapes, polished, and inlaid to form a picture or pattern. The shapes are meant to fit into a designed pattern—as opposed to mosaics, which are created by tiny cubes of roughly the same size and shape. *Opus sectile* became popular in the Roman world during the first century B.C.E., and King Herod the Great used it in many of his buildings (see p. 52). Popular materials for this paving technique included stone, such as with the above reconstructed tile floor from Banias, and sometimes even shell and glass.

FRANKIE SNYDER

COURTESY OF ORNIT LUCKATCH

COVID-19 and the Future of Archaeology

NATHAN STEINMEYER

HOW HAS THE PANDEMIC CHANGED FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY? We recently asked leading dig directors what long-term impacts the pandemic will have on field projects and excavations in Israel. Some archaeologists see change on the horizon, others point toward exposed inequalities, and yet others argue that Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) will merely be a soon-forgotten bump in the road. Here is what they had to say.

ABOVE: DUSTY DAWN. Students from Hebrew University haul soil excavated from Khirbet al-Ra'i at sunrise.

Matthew Adams

Tel Megiddo, W.F. Albright Institute

Despite not digging with co-directors Israel Finkelstein and Mario Martin at Megiddo in northern Israel in 2020 or 2021, Matthew Adams, as Director of the W.F. Albright Institute in Jerusalem, was able to help several smaller digs get started. Based on this experience, Adams believes there may be a trend toward smaller projects on the horizon: "One thing I learned from the couple of excavations that did go into the field is that they went with smaller teams. I don't think this means that digs will remain small forever, but now when directors are planning their seasons, they will consider the value of

COURTESY OF TEL ABEL BETH MAACAH EXCAVATIONS

ANCIENT STORAGE. Excavators from Cornell College and William Jessup University dig at Abel Beth Maacah in the far north of Israel. Area Supervisor Fredrika Loew holds an Iron Age IIA jar uncovered in her area.

Dig Scholarships

The Biblical Archaeology Society, publisher of **BAR**, offers dig scholarships of $2,000 each to selected applicants who wish to participate in a dig and demonstrate sufficient need. To apply, fill in the online form at **biblicalarchaeology.org/digscholarship**. In addition, applicants must submit a résumé and letter of recommendation. **Applications must be received by April 1, 2022.**

Thank You

The generous contributions of our donors make the BAS Dig Scholarship program possible. Our sincere thanks to the following supporters:

Howard Aaronson
David B. Beckham
Bialkin Family Foundation
Edward and Raynette Boshell
W. Mark and Becky Lanier
John R. Majka
John Mancini
John and Carol Merrill
Hugh Montgomery, Jr.
Dennis M. O'Reilly
Samuel D. Turner and Elizabeth Gross

less excavation, slower excavation, and smaller teams versus more excavation, faster excavation, and bigger teams."

Nava Panitz-Cohen & Naama Yahalom-Mack

Abel Beth Maacah, Hebrew University

While excavation at Abel Beth Maacah in the far north of Israel was able to continue during the pandemic, the 2020 season lasted only one week, and the dig team the following season was less than half its normal size. But like Adams, Nava Panitz-Cohen and Naama Yahalom-Mack, who co-direct the dig with Robert Mullins of Azusa Pacific University, don't necessarily view this as a negative. "We learned that small, limited excavation could be very efficient, and sometimes it even makes us select our research questions more precisely," they said. "Going forward, I think we will combine large seasons with small, targeted ones."

Daniel Master

Tel Shimron, Wheaton College

Although Shimron in northern Israel was in the field in 2021, they missed the previous season due to COVID-19. That did not slow down co-directors Daniel Master and Mario Martin's writing and publication efforts, however, thanks to the team's forethought in digitizing their project records. "There is real value in having all of your records digitized so that you are not beholden to one warehouse or physical collection of books in one country," said Master. "I would like to see actions taken to ensure that not only project directors but also the national agency that is responsible for caring for the antiquities of the country have a complete digital record. That way multiple people

BENJAMIN SITZMANN OF THE LAUTENSCHLAGER AZEKAH EXPEDITION

SHEPHELAH SMILES. Tel Aviv University student Steve De Santiago celebrates the return of happier days at Azekah in the Shephelah (foothills between the coastal plain and the Judean hill country).

Dig Sites 2022

If you would like to join an excavation in 2022, here are some opportunities. Visit **www.biblicalarchaeology.org/digs** for additional information on these and other digs, including a description of each site, goals for the coming season, important finds from past seasons, biblical connections, and profiles of dig directors. The right archaeological expedition for you is just a click away!

Abel Beth Maacah A
JUNE 26–JULY 22
Robert Mullins, Naama Yahalom-Mack, Nava Panitz-Cohen

Azekah O
JULY 17–AUGUST 12
Oded Lipschits, Manfred Oeming, Sabine Kleinman

Caesarea Maritima M
MAY 22–JUNE 18
A. Asa Egar, Andrea De Giorgi, Beverly Goodman

El-Araj H
JULY 22–AUGUST 5
Mordechai Aviam, R. Steven Notley

Khirbat al-Balu'a R
JUNE 23–AUGUST 4
Kent Bramlett, Monique Roddy, Friedbert Ninow

Khirbet Safra Q
MAY 8–JUNE 10
Paul Gregor

Legio L
MAY 13–JUNE 2
Matthew Adams, Yotam Tepper, Susan Cohen

Majduliyya I
JULY 18–AUGUST 4; SEPTEMBER 11–22
Mechael Osband

Shikhin J
MAY 30–JUNE 24
James R. Strange, Mordechai Aviam, Tom McCollough

Tel Akko F
JULY 3–AUGUST 1
Ann Killebrew, Michal Artzy

Tel Burna P
JUNE 19–JULY 15
Itzick Shai, Steven Ortiz

Tel Dan B
JUNE 12–JULY 8
David Ilan, Yifat Thareani, Jonathan Greer

Tel Hazor D
JUNE 19–JULY 29
Amnon Ben-Tor, Shlomit Bechar

Tel Kabri E
JUNE 19–JULY 28
Eric Cline, Assaf Yasur-Landau

Tel Megiddo L
JUNE 27–JULY 22
Israel Finkelstein, Matthew Adams, Mario Martin

Tel Qedesh C
JULY 3–27
Uri Davidovich, Ido Wachtel

Tel Shimron K
JUNE 18–JULY 30
Daniel Master, Mario Martin

Tel Tsaf N
JUNE 26–JULY 15
Danny Rosenberg, Florian Klimscha

Tell Keisan G
JULY 30–AUGUST 27
David Schloen, Gunnar Lehmann, Bernd Schipper

Timna S
DECEMBER 2022
Erez Ben-Yosef

have access, and the records are not just stuck someplace."

Aren Maeir

Tell es-Safi/Gath, Bar-Ilan University

Aren Maeir, long-time director of the Tell es-Safi/Gath excavation in southern Israel, used the loss of the 2020 field season to write and publish. He hopes that other excavators did the same: "I think it is the responsibility of archaeologists to excavate in a manner that they can then publish. It is irresponsible to continue excavating to no end, leaving tons of unpublished material for the next generation. It is our duty to conduct our excavations and complete them and not leave a burden of work for the future."

Yosef Garfinkel

Khirbet al-Ra'i, Hebrew University

Yosef Garfinkel, director at Khirbet al-Ra'i in southern Israel, discussed the potential volunteer shortages that could arise if the pandemic continues: "If COVID continues for decades, it is possible that we will not have volunteers for ten years or more—or maybe that we will stop having volunteers at all. We can have conferences by Zoom, but we cannot excavate by Zoom. Maybe we will have to change the way we excavate. Maybe we will need to work with Israeli youth or excavate with paid workers instead."

Jennie Ebeling

Jezreel Expedition, University of Evansville

Jennie Ebeling co-directs, with Norma Franklin, the Jezreel Expedition in northern Israel. They have completed

DAVID MOULIS OF THE TEL MOZA EXPEDITION PROJECT

LEFT: HEADS DOWN. Volunteers carefully dig the remains of a temple courtyard at Tel Moza, located only 4 miles from Jerusalem. The temple, recently excavated by archaeologists, functioned from the eighth–sixth centuries B.C.E.

BELOW: POCKET-SIZED POTTERY. Baylor student Abigail Keeney holds a Middle Bronze Age juglet (c. 2000–1550 B.C.E.) found at Tel Shimron in northern Israel.

COURTESY OF THE TEL SHIMRON EXCAVATIONS

field excavation and are currently working on publishing their findings. Ebeling discussed the increased disparities that pandemic restrictions have created for access to field work. "In terms of field archaeology, the disparities in access to resources for foreign archaeologists working in Israel have become really obvious," she explained. "Over the next few years, we are going to be looking for interested and invested people to step up and make it possible for students and archaeologists to go to Israel, Jordan, and Cyprus to get field experience. If we want to have North Americans represented in these projects in the Middle East, then we are going to have to make it happen."

Oded Lipschits

Tel Azekah & Tel Moza, Tel Aviv University

Oded Lipschits was barely slowed by the pandemic and even brought a large group of volunteers to excavate at Tel Moza, the site of a remarkable temple in central Israel in 2021. While the pandemic presented some difficulties in terms of ensuring team adherence to safety protocols, he feels that COVID-19 ultimately changed little in the world of archaeology. "When the project begins, everything is normal. We work with the same students, the same tools, the same shade nets. We cannot run a 'digital' excavation. We need people, we need tools, we need buckets, and we need to remove as much dust and soil as we can," Lipschits said. "So once COVID ends, I think that archaeology should—and probably will—continue as before."

HOW MANY? (SEE QUIZ ON P. 12)

Answer: Eleven

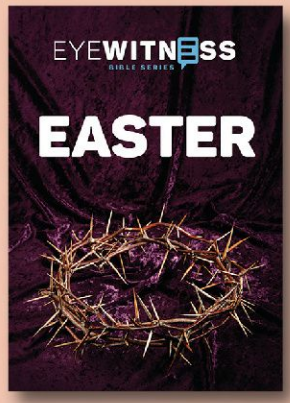
ROBERT HARDING/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Standing on the elevated desert plateau just outside the southwestern suburb of modern Cairo, the iconic Giza Pyramids represent the wealth and engineering ingenuity of ancient Egypt. One of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World (and the last one still standing), the three monumental pyramids were built as tombs for three different pharaohs of the Fourth Dynasty (c. 2600–2500 B.C.E.), at the peak of the Old Kingdom. At 480 feet high, the largest among them belongs to Khufu (or Cheops); the second one was constructed for Khufu's son Khafre (or Khefren). The latest and smallest is that of Khufu's grandson Menkaure (or Mycerinus).

But these are not the only pyramids at Giza. The royal necropolis includes several smaller pyramid tombs. Arranged as satellites of the three main pyramids, these belong to queens: four with the Khufu pyramid, one with Khafre, and three more with Menkaure, bringing the total number of Giza pyramids to 11.

EYEWITNESS BIBLE SERIES

The ***Eyewitness Bible Series*** is a fascinating behind-the-scenes study of the people and stories that are bedrock to the Christian faith, ancient stories that still echo with deep signficance for today's world through eyewitness accounts. The series of narrations are an exploration of Scripture to empower your faith. There are currently seven DVDs available with more to come!

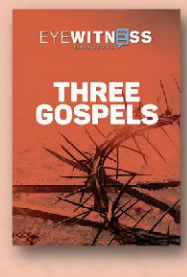


Easter

The Easter Series is a collection of eight episodes from other *Eyewitness Bible Series* titles. These episodes are selected to be watched on each day of Holy Week. 120 minutes.

1 - **Palm Sunday** shows the Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.
2 - In **Fig Monday**'s episode, Lazarus tells his story of being resurrected.
3 - **Holy Tuesday**'s episode shows Andrew's story.
4 - **Spy Wednesday** is an episode told by Judas.
5 - **Maundy Thursday**'s episode is an interpretation of the story of the vine and branches that Jesus taught on Thursday night before his crucifixion.
6 - **Good Friday**'s episode is told by two of the main characters of the trial of Jesus: Peter and Pilate.
7 - **Black Saturday**'s episode is told by Joseph of Arimathea, who was involved in Jesus' death and burial.
8 - **Easter Sunday**'s episode is told by Mary Magdalene, the first person to see the resurrected Jesus.

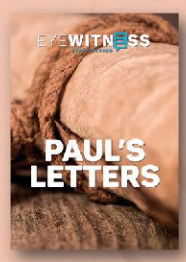
DVD - #502010D, ~~$19.99~~ **SALE! $14.99**



Three Gospels

This volume covers the three Gospels of Mathew, Mark, and John. The multiple Gospel accounts help us see the brilliance of the Spirit in meeting the needs of audiences over the last two millennia. 184 minutes.

DVD - #502015D, ~~$19.99~~
SALE! $14.99



Paul's Letters

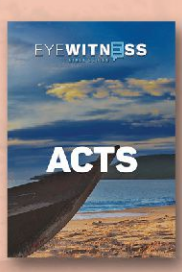
There is treasure hidden in Paul's thirteen letters, but the path to find it is not obvious. His thirteen generally accepted letters are arranged in two blocks: the nine written to churches, then the four written to individuals. 202 minutes.

DVD - #502005D, ~~$19.99~~
SALE! $14.99

Luke

This series is meant to imitate some of the stories Luke might have heard, as well as explore their meaning and importance. It is true to the Bible but fills in story lines based on history, geography, and imagination. 300 minutes.

DVD - #502002D, ~~$19.99~~
SALE! $14.99



Acts

Acts is a history of the first three decades of the Church. The series illustrates the stories that author Luke might have heard from a dozen of the characters featured in his book of Acts. 269 minutes.

DVD - #502003D, ~~$19.99~~
SALE! $14.99

Genesis & Job

Genesis describes the creation of Earth, gives the history of mankind, and provides a brief history of the Israelite nation. Job is a story of a man who is believed to have lived in the time before the Israelite nation existed. 173 minutes.

DVD - #502004D, ~~$19.99~~
SALE! $14.99

Promised Land

This series covers the books in the Bible from Exodus to Judges, which describe events from the birth of Moses to the end of the era of the judges of Israel. The series covers a time span of more than four centuries. 258 minutes.

DVD - #502006D, ~~$19.99~~
SALE! $14.99

All 7 for $59.99, #97235D *(plus $7.99 S&H)* **with coupon code BAR0322E. Save $45!**

GATEWAY FILMS VISION VIDEO

www.VisionVideo.com
Please use coupon code **BAR0322E** in the shopping cart.

1-800-523-0226
Please mention source code **BAR0322E** when ordering.

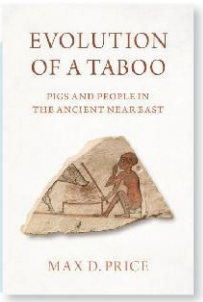
Vision Video–Dept BAR0322E
PO Box 540
Worcester, PA 19490
(include $7.99 S&H)

Prices are good until May 1, 2022. Your satisfaction is guaranteed! All titles are available on RedeemTV.com.

Pig Taboo in History

ARON M. MAEIR

Evolution of a Taboo
Pigs and People in the Ancient Near East
By Max D. Price
(Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2020), xxii + 312 pp., 19 figures (maps, graphs, plans, drawings, photos), $34.95 (hardcover)



AS SOMEONE who has been studying the Philistine culture for some 25 years, I am greatly interested in the dietary patterns of the Iron Age Philistines and their neighbors—including who did and who didn't eat pig. And this is one of the central issues addressed in the recent book by Max Price. An anthropologist and zoologist at MIT, Price explores the complex relations between pigs and humans in the Near East, focusing on ancient times but also providing perspective on the deep cultural ramifications until today.

Price first provides the geographical, zoological, and cultural background and tells the early history of human-pig interaction. He then delves into the archaeology of the late prehistoric period, Bronze Age, and Iron Age, covering the complex process of pig domestication, the role of the pig in early cities, the theoretical issues of the pig taboo, and the appearance of the taboo in early Israel. On the extensively discussed topic of pork consumption among the Philistines and the lack thereof in Israel and Judah, he stresses that simplistic interpretations (pig = Philistine, no pig = Israelite/Judahite) are in need of revision, because the evidence shows a more complex picture. He nevertheless believes that there is a clear dichotomy in the early Iron Age between pig-eating Philistines and abstaining Israelites/Judahites, even as he assumes that the biblical prohibitions date to the late Iron Age, when the biblical writers used the earlier Israelite abstention from pig as a way to define their culture as unique.

The book also discusses the importance of pigs in the Greco-Roman diet and of pig avoidance in the identification, definition, and construction of Jewish "otherness." The consumption of pig became a central factor in the meeting between Judaism and the classical and then later Christian world. Finally, Price discusses the pig taboo in early Islam and how it became a central identifying factor between Muslims and Christians, from the early Middle Ages until today.

This is an excellent book on a very complex topic. It is well structured and easy to read. Let me offer just a few critical comments.

Wow! A Simple to Use Computer Designed Especially for Seniors!

Easy to read. Easy to see. Easy to use. Just plug it in!

NEW

Now comes with...

Enhanced Video Chat

Faster Email

Larger 22-inch hi-resolution screen – easier to see
16% more viewing area

Simple navigation – so you never get lost

Intel® processor – lightning fast

Computer is in the monitor – No bulky tower

Text to Speech translation – it can even read your emails to you!

U.S. Based Customer Service

FREE
Automatic Software Updates

"I love this computer! It is easy to read and to use! I get photo updates from my children and grandchildren all the time."
– Janet F.

Have you ever said to yourself "I'd love to get a computer, if only I could figure out how to use it." Well, you're not alone. Computers were supposed to make our lives simpler, but they've gotten so complicated that they are not worth the trouble. With all of the "pointing and clicking" and "dragging and dropping" you're lucky if you can figure out where you are. Plus, you are constantly worrying about viruses and freeze-ups. If this sounds familiar, we have great news for you. There is finally a computer that's designed for simplicity and ease of use. It's the WOW Computer, and it was designed with you in mind. This computer is easy-to-use, worry-free and literally puts the world at your fingertips. From the moment you open the box, you'll realize how different the WOW Computer is. The components are all connected; all you do is plug it into an outlet and your high-speed Internet connection. Then you'll see the screen – it's now 22 inches. This is a completely new touch screen system, without the cluttered look of the normal computer screen. The "buttons" on the screen are easy to see and easy to understand. All you do is touch one of them, from the Web, Email, Calendar to Games– you name it… and a new screen opens up. It's so easy to use you won't have to ask your children or grandchildren for help. Until now, the very people who could benefit most from E-mail and the Internet are the ones that have had the hardest time accessing it. Now, thanks to the WOW Computer, countless older Americans are discovering the wonderful world of the Internet every day. Isn't it time you took part? Call now, and you'll find out why tens of thousands of satisfied seniors are now enjoying their WOW Computers, emailing their grandchildren, and experiencing everything the Internet has to offer. Call today!

- Send & Receive Emails
- Have video chats with family and friends
- Surf the Internet:
  Get current weather and news
- Play games Online:
  Hundreds to choose from!

Call now toll free and find out how you can get the new WOW! Computer.

Mention promotional code 116324 for special introductory pricing.

1-888-606-6387

The WOW! Computer

BBB ACCREDITED BUSINESS Rating of A+

84115

As someone who "digs" the Philistines, I have several comments regarding pigs and Philistines. For one, it is incorrect to state that in the regions from which the Philistines derived (e.g., the Aegean), pig eating was common. Rather, the origins of the Philistines are diverse (not only the Aegean),* and, even within the Aegean, the consumption of pig was hardly consistent. It also seems to me that although Price is aware of the complexity of assigning archaeological remains to specific identities, he often makes somewhat simplistic connections between material culture and very specific identity groups. I would advise a more prudent approach.[1]

Price dates the textual codification of the Israelite/Judahite pig taboo to the eighth or seventh century in Judah, based on a late Iron Age dating for the Deuteronomist and Priestly sources in the Bible.** However, since the dating of these sources is highly debated, it is somewhat precarious to use it as a central argument in the formation of the taboo. Price also repeatedly refers to an early *halakhah* (Jewish ritual law) in the Iron Age. Although there undoubtedly were ritual customs from the Iron Age Judahites/Israelites that were passed on to later Jewish communities, the major differences between ritual practices in the Iron Age and post-Iron Age communities suggest that one cannot assume the existence of a *halakhah* in Iron Age Judah. It has recently been shown, for instance, that the biblical prohibitions regarding fish were not adhered to in Iron Age Jerusalem, and evidence of pork consumption was found in late Iron Age Jerusalem.[2]

Pig consumption became a central factor in the meeting between Judaism and the classical world.

My present quibbles are not meant to obscure the fact that this is an excellent book, one that both summarizes a large amount of information on such a complex and interesting topic and offers an overall picture of the development of the pig taboo—in Judaism and later in Islam. It also shows how the taboo defined different ethnic and religious groups and what role it played in their interactions with neighboring groups and cultures. Although I do not agree with the author's every statement, this book will certainly establish itself as the basic text on this important topic for many years to come.

* For more on Philistine origins, see p. 30.

** See Richard Elliott Friedman, "Taking the Biblical Text Apart," *Bible Review*, Fall 2005.

[1] Aren M. Maeir, "On Defining Israel: Or, Let's Do the Kulturkreislehre Again!" *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel* 10.2 (2021), pp. 106–148.

[2] Yonatan Adler and Omri Lernau, "The Pentateuchal Dietary Proscription Against Finless and Scaleless Aquatic Species in Light of Ancient Fish Remains," *Tel Aviv* 48.1 (2021), pp. 5–26; Lidar Sapir-Hen, Joe Uziel, and Ortal Chalaf, "Everything but the Oink: On the Discovery of an Articulated Pig in Iron Age Jerusalem and Its Meaning to Judahite Consumption Practices," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 84.2 (2021), pp. 110–119.

Make your home more comfortable than ever

"To you, it's the **perfect lift chair.** To me, it's the **best sleep chair** I've ever had."

— J. Fitzgerald, VA

You can't always lie down in bed and sleep. Heartburn, cardiac problems, hip or back aches – and dozens of other ailments and worries. Those are the nights you'd give anything for a comfortable chair to sleep in: one that reclines to exactly the right degree, raises your feet and legs just where you want them, supports your head and shoulders properly, and operates at the touch of a button.

Our **Perfect Sleep Chair®** does all that and more. More than a chair or recliner, it's designed to provide total comfort. **Choose your preferred heat and massage settings, for hours of soothing relaxation.** Reading or watching TV? Our chair's recline technology allows you to pause the chair in an infinite number of settings. And best of all, it features a powerful lift mechanism that tilts the entire chair forward, making it easy to stand. You'll love the other benefits, too. It helps with correct spinal alignment and promotes back pressure relief, to prevent back and muscle pain. The overstuffed, oversized biscuit style back and unique seat design will cradle you in comfort. Generously filled, wide armrests provide enhanced arm support when sitting or reclining. **It even has a battery backup in case of a power outage.**

White glove delivery included in shipping charge. Professionals will deliver the chair to the exact spot in your home where you want it, unpack it, inspect it, test it, position it, and even carry the packaging away! You get your choice of plush and luxurious Brisa™, stain and water repellent custom-manufactured DuraLux™ with the classic leather look or plush MicroLux™ microfiber in a variety of colors to fit any decor. **Call now!**

The Perfect Sleep Chair®

1-888-731-3947

Please mention code 116323 when ordering.

Now available in a variety of colors, fabrics and sizes. Footrest may vary by model

Brisa™ *plush & luxurious*	Saddle	Coffee Bean	! New		
Long Lasting DuraLux™ *stain & water repellent*	Mahogany (Burgundy)	Tan	Chocolate	Blue	
MicroLux™ Microfiber *breathable & amazingly soft*	Burgundy	Cashmere	Chocolate	Indigo	

Because each Perfect Sleep Chair is a made-to-order bedding product it cannot be returned, but if it arrives damaged or defective, at our option we will repair it or replace it.

46584

Piece By Piece

Exploring the Origins of the Philistines

DANIEL M. MASTER

WHO WERE THE PHILISTINES? For centuries, the answer seemed clear: The Philistines were ancient people from the Bible, villains fighting against God's people. Every Philistine success was lamented, every defeat celebrated in a classic clash between the forces of light and darkness. No one cheered for Goliath's military prowess or applauded Delilah's seduction.

But what was the origin of these ancient villains? The Table of Nations in Genesis 10 seems to connect the Philistines with the Egyptians (10:13–14). Other texts in Deuteronomy, Amos, and Jeremiah place them in Caphtor, leading some to speculate that Caphtor was in the Egyptian Delta. According to this hypothesis, the Philistines must have arrived some time before the era of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Building on the discoveries of the past 200 years,* we are not reliant solely on the Bible to formulate our conclusions. Egyptian, Assyrian, and Babylonian texts all speak of the Philistines. Archaeologists have now excavated four of the five major Philistine cities listed in the Hebrew Bible (Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, and Gath). More recently, geneticists have sequenced Iron Age genomes from the city of Ashkelon, providing dramatic new insights into Philistine origins. All these sources clarify the Philistine story.

As soon as hieroglyphs were deciphered in the 19th century, references to "Peleset" were observed in ancient Egyptian texts. The Peleset were immediately connected to the Philistines, an equation still considered valid today. Because the Egyptian New Kingdom had dominated the land of Canaan in the preceding centuries, Egyptian records would likely have mentioned any Philistines even tangentially involved in the southern Levant. So when they suddenly appear in the 12th-century inscriptions from the walls of Ramesses III's temple at Medinet Habu, we have a good indication of when they first arrived in the region. In the Egyptian texts, the Peleset appear as part of a confederation of peoples from the "islands" who wreaked havoc

* This article is heavily indebted to the work of Lawrence Stager and the results of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon. See Lawrence E. Stager, "When Canaanites and Philistines Ruled Ashkelon," **BAR**, March/April 1991.

COURTESY OF THE LEON LEVY EXPEDITION TO ASHKELON

PATENT POTTERY. These pottery pieces all come from Ashkelon and were decorated by the earliest Philistines with patterns that inlcude spirals and geometric designs. These ceramics connect Ashkelon's pottery to similarly decorated vessels in Cyprus and the Aegean—and form a recognizable Philistine assemblage.

across the eastern Mediterranean and finally attacked Egypt itself.

Even with the Egyptian clues, many questions remained: The Egyptian texts noted that these peoples came from "islands" but did not specify which islands. Further, it was not clear if all of the groups linked with the Peleset came from the same region: Did they start out together, or did new groups join them during their travels?

In the 19th century, scholars called the Peleset and their coconspirators "Sea Peoples," connecting them with the myths of Homer. The movements of Sea Peoples noted in the Egyptian texts seem to echo tales of Odysseus and Aeneas. In addition, the classical legend of Mopsus, a survivor of the Trojan War, recalled his leading people through Cilicia, ultimately arriving with a group at Ashkelon. The mention of the Philistines in such contexts led scholars to wonder if the Philistines of the Bible could be connected to classical legends, although any speculative connections with the heroes (or villains) at Troy remained shrouded in the same uncertainty as the rest of Homer's world—with no clear basis in the history of the second millennium B.C.E.

Such an incomplete story opened the way for archaeologists to fill in the gaps. Early 20th-century excavators in the southern Levant (first under the Ottoman empire, then under the British Mandate) focused their attention on the 12th century B.C.E., based on the date of the Egyptian texts. At just this chronological horizon, they discovered locally made pots with decorations that reminded them of patterns from the Bronze Age Aegean.[1] Archaeologists saw the ceramics as key to demonstrating that a new people had moved into the region from the Aegean as mentioned in Egyptian texts. The picture was becoming clearer.

In the late 20th century, archaeologists turned to the

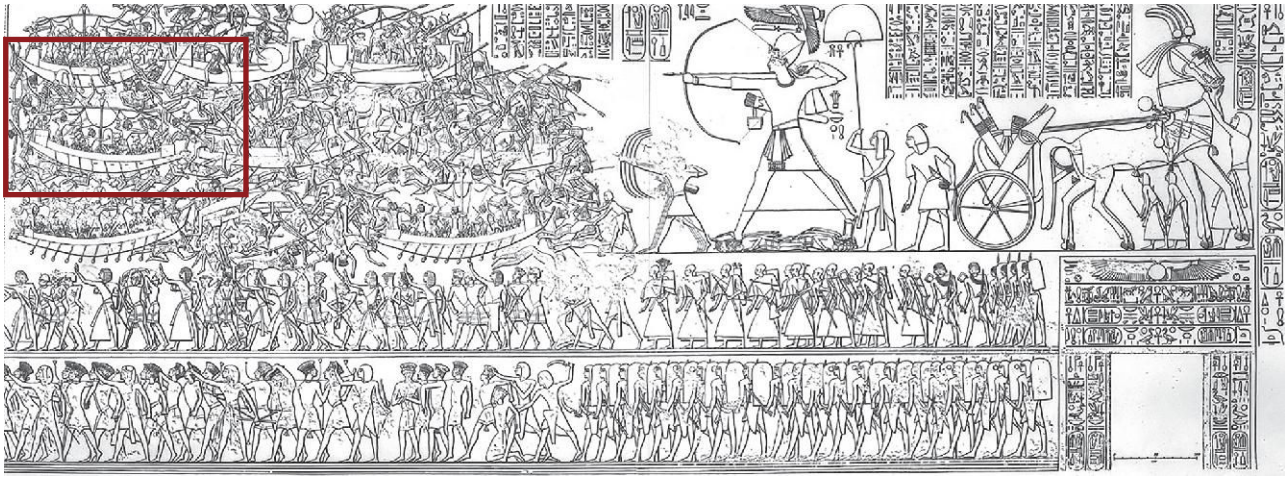
cities that the Bible lists as "Philistine," with modern excavations at Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron, and finally Tell es-Safi/Gath (Gaza remaining unexplored).* Each excavation team made similar discoveries. In the 12th century B.C.E., at all of these sites, new ideas about architecture, family, food, and art appeared suddenly and broadly. The patterns were only rarely found elsewhere in the southern Levant, but they could be connected to the west, either to Cyprus or to the Mycenaean archaeological culture encompassing mainland Greece, Crete, and the western coast of Turkey.

But patterns of objects can never tell the whole story of a people. Even today, if we reflect on the clothes we wear or the daily objects we use, we must admit that the place of their manufacture—and even the details

* See Trude Dothan, "What We Know About the Philistines," **BAR**, July/August 1982; Seymour Gitin, "Excavating Ekron: Major Philistine City Survived by Absorbing Other Cultures," **BAR**, November/December 2005; Daniel M. Master and Lawrence E. Stager, "Buy Low, Sell High: The Marketplace at Ashkelon," **BAR**, January/February 2014; Aren M. Maeir and Carl S. Ehrlich, "Excavating Philistine Gath: Have We Found Goliath's Hometown?" **BAR**, November/December 2001.

SEA ASSAULT. A large naval battle covers a wall of Ramesses III's mortuary temple at Medinet Habu (see detail at top with drawing of full panel below). Accompanying inscriptions identify the perpetrators as a confederation of island tribes—including the Denyen, Tjeker, and Peleset (Philistines)—who barraged the eastern Mediterranean and Egypt. These "Sea Peoples" sought food and a new homeland. After an intense fight, the Egyptians defeated the Sea Peoples and resettled some of them in Canaan.

ALEXANDER SCHICK/BIBELAUSSTELLUNG.DE



PUBLIC DOMAIN

of their style—do not always reflect our own location or background. Much is traded; much is imported. The same was true in the ancient world. It is up to archaeologists to determine whether the objects found in the excavation trench are characteristic of a particular group or simply imports from another region.

In 1995, Lawrence Stager, the late director of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon, tried to address this specific difficulty by building a checklist to determine whether there was enough evidence in the region of Philistine occupation to show an actual migration, as opposed to internal developments or trade. He argued that the material culture in Philistia was distinct from its surroundings and linked to earlier cultural patterns in the Aegean. There was a plausible route that linked the two areas. As a result, Stager supported the long-held idea of an Aegean migration in the 12th century. Other archaeologists agreed, arguing that when the cultural change is wide and deep enough, when it touches the very patterns of hearth and home, it can be considered a "deep change" and can therefore be linked to migration.[2]

PHILISTINE ORIGINS. The Medinet Habu inscriptions record a movement of Sea Peoples from the Aegean islands who arrived in Egypt (see route, above). They did not succeed in conquering Egypt, but some did settle in the Levantine cities of Ashkelon, Ashdod, and Gaza, which would later become the heartland of Philistia. Both Egyptian and classical sources recount Aegean origins for the Philistines, a tradition now corroborated by DNA recovered from burials at Ashkelon.

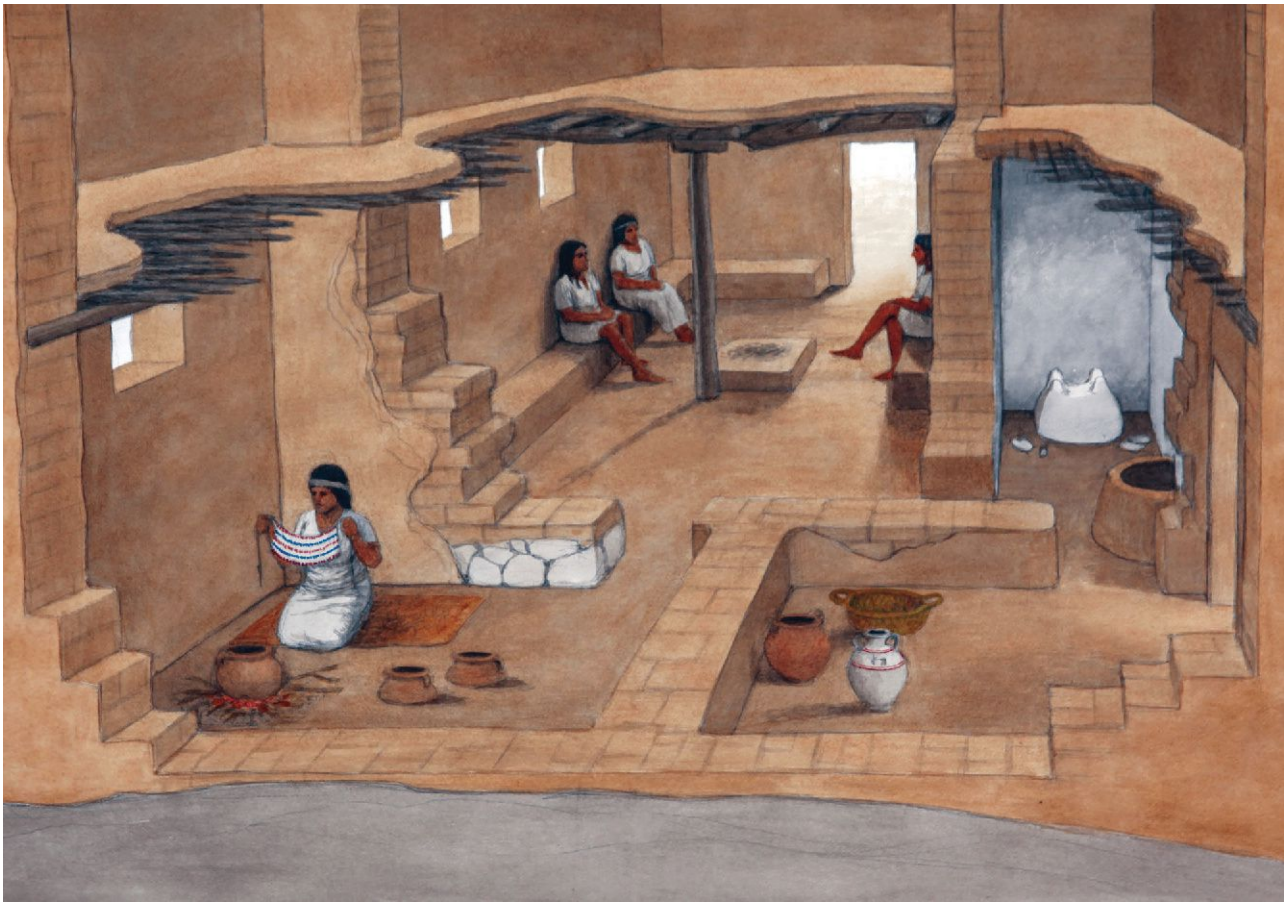
Yet, as much as archaeologists were tempted to infer that this group had migrated based on the objects that they used, the conclusion was still indirect. While some things changed in Philistine cities, many cultural features stayed the same. Did this mean that only a few people migrated? Additionally, some Philistine objects were rare in the Aegean but common in Cyprus. Did this hint that Cyprus played a more important role? It was difficult to weigh the evidence amid the uncertainties.

One set of scholars even argued that the whole trajectory was off target. They asked whether the interpretation of texts, both Egyptian and biblical, had biased archaeologists so much that a few trinkets were privileged, while the mass of local material was ignored. Some revisited the basic Egyptian texts that started it all, placing the battles in the days of Ramesses III farther north, at the margins of the Egyptian empire. A few years ago, texts found in southeastern Turkey that referred to "Walastin" or "Palastin" prompted the idea that this was the location of the Philistines in the 12th and 11th centuries. Some scholars went so far as to argue that there was no evidence for associating early Iron Age material from the southern Levant with the Philistines.[3]

Beginning in 2013, however, the first direct evidence for the origin of the inhabitants of Philistia in the 12th and 11th centuries emerged. The Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon, in concert with the Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History, launched a program to chart the genetic profiles of the ancient Bronze and Iron Age inhabitants of the city.[4] (By then I had joined Lawrence Stager as a director of excavations at Ashkelon.) Rather than examining ancient texts, perhaps written much later and having an agenda of their own, or looking at ancient artifacts that provide only indirect evidence, this project sought to look at the genetic material of the inhabitants themselves.

The first part of this genetic research examined people who lived at Ashkelon during the middle of the second millennium. These individuals were buried in typical multigenerational family tombs of the Bronze Age. Each of the Bronze Age individuals from Ashkelon contained genetic material similar to groups that lived up and down the coast of the Levant in the Bronze Age, similar to the inhabitants of Sidon and Megiddo. These were "local" groups of the Late Bronze and Iron Ages, and they provided a baseline for understanding the 12th century at Ashkelon.

In the late 12th century, just when the material culture changed and the Egyptian texts suggest migration, the inhabitants of Ashkelon buried infants in shallow graves under the floors of their houses. Our excavations uncovered eight of these rare burials. It is extremely unusual to find any human remains from 12th-century



BALAGE BALOGH/ARCHAEOLOGY ILLUSTRATED.COM

HEARTH AND HOME. Based on archaeological findings, this drawing envisions a specific Philistine house at Ashkelon. It shows several rooms where household members would have performed daily activities, such as cooking, making beadwork, and even worshiping at a household shrine. The floorplan of this two-storied house more closely resembles those of the Aegean world than those of the Philistines' Canaanite and Israelite neighbors.

Philistia. These infants were too young to have traveled, and their interment burial beneath houses is a mark of the permanent settlement of their families in the homes above.

In the first round of testing, the genetic sequence of one of these infants was very different from that of Ashkelon's Bronze Age inhabitants. The infant's ancestors had come from somewhere else. In fact, this infant showed genetic characteristics of "Western European Hunter-Gatherers." This name is shorthand for a Stone Age population that lived in Europe long ago and never left. These genetic anomalies can be found in many European populations, though it is not something as specific as Spanish, French, or German would be in modern Europe. It is a much broader marker, noted in varying degrees in populations from Crete to the British Isles.

Here, for the first—and really only—time in the Bronze or Iron Age world, this geographically foreign genetic material appeared in families in Ashkelon. When all the genetic material was taken into account (not just the small Western European Hunter-Gatherer component), no place was a better match for the genetic material found than Crete—though places farther west also produced good, possible matches. This result was so interesting that it needed further confirmation. After looking at all the infants, three additional individuals from Ashkelon, all infants buried beneath houses, still had enough preserved genetic material for analysis. The results in each case showed the same nonlocal genetic heritage, but, interestingly, none of the four individuals was closely related to the other. This was not just one new family; this was a decidedly new population.

For researchers, this definitive evidence established a 12th-century migration. These tests showed that a significant number of the Iron Age I inhabitants of Ashkelon came from somewhere else. Even though 100 percent of the infants with preserved DNA showed some of this ancestry, this does not mean that Ashkelon's entire 12th-century population was made up of immigrants. But it does show, unequivocally, that a migration occurred. When these new data were combined with the contemporary Egyptian references that describe the Peleset, or Philistines, as part of a migrating group along with the later biblical references to Philistine Ashkelon, the

origin story becomes clear: People came to Ashkelon in the 12th century and settled there, probably as part of a migration that started in Crete. These were the original Philistines of Ashkelon.

But, as soon as they arrived to inhabited Levantine cities like Ashkelon, the situation became quite complicated. Typically, human societies are divided into named groups. But there is often uncertainty around the edges of a group and ambiguity about whether a person belongs on one side or another of the social boundary. This does not detract from the importance of such groups in the social landscape. From the Iron Age texts, it appears that the Philistines were one such group, repeatedly called out by the people around them. Yet even though the name "Philistine" did not change for the entirety of the Iron Age, that does not mean that everything stayed the same. Even as social names persist, how people live—in their technology, economy, or simply taste and style—changes frequently. So it was with the Philistines.

For the first decades of their settlement, the Philistines lived in the shadow of the Egyptians. The Egyptians circumscribed their movement with a ring of fortresses, forcing them inward to live alongside the earlier inhabitants of the region. Even then, at each of the Philistine sites, a similar general pattern began to appear.

COURTESY OF THE LEON LEVY EXPEDITION TO ASHKELON

COLLECTION OF THE ISRAEL ANTIQUITIES AUTHORITY/PHOTO © THE ISRAEL MUSEUM, JERUSALEM BY YORAM LEHMANN

DISTINCTLY PHILISTINE. The Philistines created and used a distinct assemblage of artifacts—from everyday objects, such as pottery and loom weights, to special objects, like weapons and religious paraphernalia. The ceramic figurine above dates to the early Iron Age and measures about 7 inches in height. It resembles a chair with a female torso and head as its back. Archaeologists call this figure an Ashdoda, after the Philistine city of Ashdod where it was first identified.

PHILISTINE INFANT. The Philistines buried infants under the floors of their houses, often in large jars (left). DNA was preserved in four such infant burials at Ashkelon and shows that their ancestors came from the central Mediterranean, most likely ancient Crete.

Finding Ashkelon's Philistine Cemetery

DANIEL M. MASTER

It happened right in the middle of our 2012 excavation season. A car stopped along the side of the road, and a man jumped out and said, "I know where the Iron Age cemetery of Ashkelon is located."

This is not the strangest thing I have heard in the middle of a dig season, but it was surely a surprise. Our team had been working at Ashkelon for almost 30 years, and I had never even heard a rumor about a cemetery. But the man followed up. His name was Shlomo Piphano, and he had been the Department of Antiquities (now Israel Antiquities Authority) inspector for this area in the late 1980s. He had been tasked with examining a piece of land that was going to be the site of a municipal playground. Everywhere he probed, he found graves 16 inches (40 cm) below the surface. Most contained distinctive black and red imported juglets that only appear in the Iron Age.

At that point, everyone was interested in Shlomo's story, but modern excavation is complicated. One does not just get a tip one day and start digging the next. Excavation requires careful planning (and layers of government approval). We spent the next year vetting the story, looking for Shlomo's original report (now lost), and then arranging permission for trial excavation. We returned 12 months later, full of optimism. But, in 2013, everything failed that we tried. Wherever we excavated, we found sterile soil. Shlomo was doubting his own memory; nothing was as he had expected.

One person who did not give up was Ashkelon's Associate Director, Dr. Adam Aja. Even though Shlomo suggested that the graves would be only 16 inches down, Adam kept digging more than 10 feet (3 m) down. Here, at least, there was a change in the soil color, but it could have been the difference between two natural formations. Nothing we had seen on the way down gave us hope that we were in cultural deposits. Still, Adam continued down, and 16 inches after that, he rediscovered the Iron Age cemetery of Philistine Ashkelon!

It turns out that since Shlomo's day, to adapt the area for parking, more than 10 feet of soil had been dumped on this spot. Once the wind sprinkled sand over the top, no one remembered what had happened—it all blended in. If it had not been for Shlomo's tip and Adam's persistence, this discovery would have been hidden for at least another generation. We never would have started sampling DNA across the site, and we would have missed one of Ashkelon's greatest discoveries.

MEGAN SAUTER

Although the majority of the Philistines in Ashkelon's cemetery were buried in simple pits, others were cremated in jars or even buried in built tombs, such as the multi-chambered tomb at left.

Their distinctive pottery has designs or shapes that combined Aegean and local ceramic patterns into something uniquely Philistine.

With the decline of the Egyptian New Kingdom, Egypt withdrew from Canaan in the late 12th century. At that point, the breadth of regional interactions between the Philistines and others accelerated. Distinctive Philistine artifacts were taken across the region and then imitated, and more local motifs appear in the Philistine decorative repertoire. This was a dynamic process involving choices and influences at every level of society. Although archaeologists have used various bits of jargon to describe this phenomenon (*hybridity*, *creolization*, *transculturalism*, etc.),[5] it was no doubt a complex cultural process that does not fit easily into our conceptual models and explanations.

Over time, though, the cultural development of the region faced a new constraint. From the middle of the 12th century, many parts of the eastern Mediterranean experienced a massive decline in trade, often considered the beginning of a "dark age." For the inhabitants of Philistia, this meant that, in practice, the only new influences that they had in their world were regional, connected either to Egypt, to Levantine coastal cities, or to their inland neighbors. While aspects of the Aegean remained part of their heritage, their Aegean connections were never renewed with fresh cultural, linguistic, or genetic contributions from that world. As would be

COURTESY OF THE LEON LEVY EXPEDITION TO ASHKELON

© TSAFRIR ABAYOV/COURTESY OF THE LEON LEVY EXPEDITION TO ASHKELON

ASHKELON'S CEMETERY is the first extensive burial ground found at a Philistine city. Archaeologists uncovered more than 210 burials in the cemetery—located outside the ancient city and used from the eleventh to eighth centuries B.C.E. In the above photo (from left), Drs. Adam Aja, Sherry Fox, and Daniel Master discuss a tenth–ninth century B.C.E. burial, containing two individuals on top of each other. The bottom individual has a badly broken leg. Archaeologists have already removed half of the top skeleton. In the photo at left, three separate burials are visible. The central individual was buried in the ninth century; analysis shows that this individual was an adult male. Grave goods, including two storage jars, a bowl, and a juglet, accompany the burial. These goods may have been meant to provide for the individual in the afterlife.

expected, the Philistines began to look more and more like their neighbors. The pottery lost its characteristic Aegean appearance and then even much of its distinctiveness within the region. Their linguistic differences diminished so significantly that, by the tenth century, Philistine writing used local alphabetic scripts that conveyed a Semitic language. The Philistines looked, at least to modern archaeologists, much like their neighbors.

By the middle of the Iron Age, there was virtually nothing left in the material record that was distinctive to the cities of Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, and Gath—and nothing that would have been recognized as "Philistine" by those earlier migrants from the 12th century.

At Ashkelon, a third genetic study looked at the patterns visible in the Philistine cemetery, dated to the tenth and ninth centuries. While there was some evidence of the same Western European Hunter-Gatherer genetic input, for all statistical purposes, it could not be identified for certain. The best models showed that these people were descendants of both the 12th-century inhabitants *and* the earlier Bronze Age inhabitants. It appears from these results that so much intermarriage had taken place between the original immigrants and the people around them that the genetic makeup of Ashkelon's inhabitants had lost its immigrant distinctiveness.

An unsophisticated reading of this evidence might lead one to argue that these people had ceased to be

"real" Philistines. But popular definitions often confuse biology and ethnicity, a combination that does not reflect most ancient—or, it must be said, modern—societies. Despite rampant intermarriage, the inhabitants of Ashkelon, Ekron, Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod were still called "Philistines" by the Assyrians, Babylonians, and biblical writers throughout the rest of the Iron Age. This is a critical witness to the survival of the Philistines as a distinct group. The genetic tests reveal that their ongoing social self-definition did not revolve around a particular inherited, biological characteristic. Something else must have been key to their identity in their eyes and in the eyes of others.

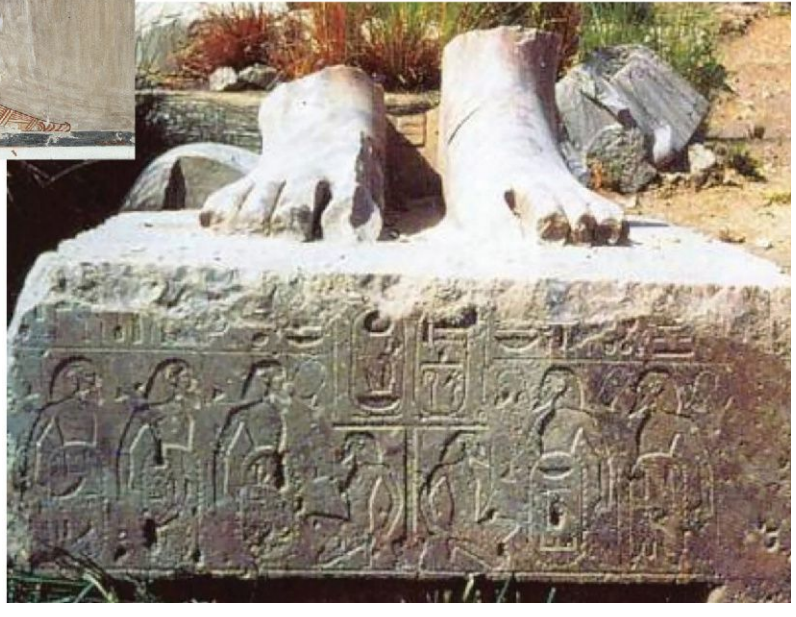
Toward the end of Philistine history, the biblical prophets Amos and Jeremiah both share an interesting observation about the Philistines of their day. Amos's oracle sees the divine hand in earlier events: "Didn't I bring up Israel from the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor, and Aram from Kir?" (Amos 9:7, author's translation). In Amos's telling, all three groups were immigrants to the region.

The Philistine reference fits together in a surprising way with research on the very idea of Caphtor itself. In Egypt, in New Kingdom tombs, a group called the Kephtiu was pictured with dress and objects that seem to connect to the Minoan archaeological culture, centered in Crete and its vicinity. An inscription on the base of a statue at Kom el-Hetan similarly seemed to connect Kephtiu with an itinerary of named cities from this part of the Aegean. So, quite apart from the study of the Philistines, scholars linked Kephtiu and Caphtor to Crete.[6] Of course, this identification is based on Egyptian perceptions in the 15th and 14th centuries, and Amos is writing in the eighth century, when the term is a rarely used archaism.

As we have seen, Crete is one of the closest matches to the genetic heritage of the Ashkelon individuals from the 12th century, much closer than that of mainland Greece, Turkey, or any other options represented in the current database of ancient samples. But Amos was writing in the eighth century, past the time where that genetic material can be meaningfully identified in the Philistine genome and past the time when Caphtor was a common term. Amos's connection between the Philistines and Caphtor is not something that could have been derived *de novo* in the eighth century, even with the most advanced tools in our modern toolkit. Indeed, if archaeologists and geneticists had not been able to sequence genomes from that sliver of time in the 12th and 11th centuries, no one would have caught this at all.

Jeremiah, writing more than a century after Amos, says something similar: "The Lord is about to devastate

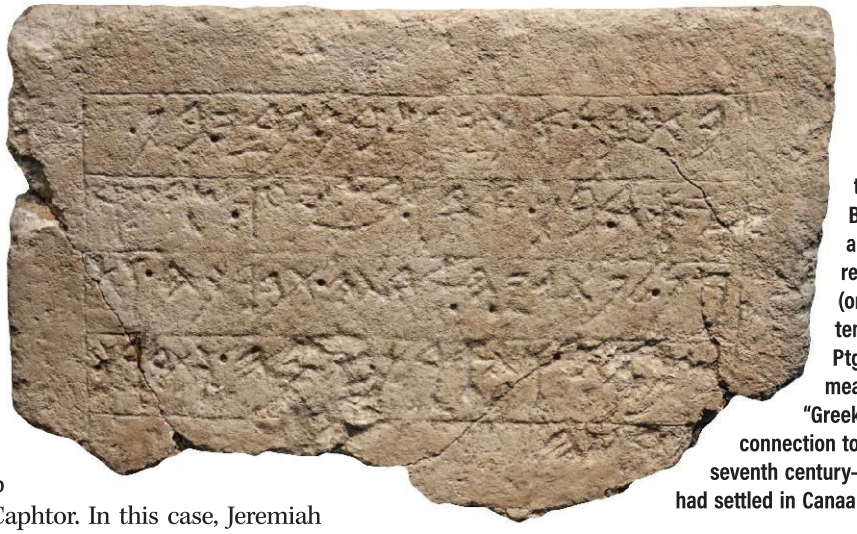
THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK, ROGERS FUND, 1931. WWW.METMUSEUM.ORG



PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES STRANGE, COURTESY OF ERIC H. CLINE

CRETAN GREETINGS. Depictions from New Kingdom Egypt connect the Kephtiu to the Aegean world, specifically to Crete. In the above scene, the Kephtiu—in Aegean dress, resembling that of the Minoans—bring gifts of metal vessels and ingots. The scene comes from the Tomb of Rekhmire at Thebes and dates to the 15th century B.C.E., during the reign of Thutmose III. The pictured facsimile painting is in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Similarly, the Kephtiu appear on a 14th-century statue base (see right) from the mortuary temple of Amenhotep III at Kom el-Hetan, in western Thebes. The depictions of Kephtiu and Tanaja (mainland Greeks) as captives are accompanied by lists of Minoan and Mycenaean cities.

TODD BOLEN/BIBLEPLACES.COM



EKRON INSCRIPTION. Discovered within a temple at Ekron, this Philistine dedicatory inscription, dated to the seventh century B.C.E. and written in a Semitic language, records that King Ikausu (or Achish) built the city's temple for the goddess Ptgyh. The name Ikausu, meaning "Achaean" or "Greek," shows a Philistine connection to the West even in the seventh century—500 years after they had settled in Canaan.

the Philistines, remnant of the Island of Caphtor. Baldness has come upon Gaza; Ashkelon is destroyed" (47:4). Jeremiah still saw Ashkelon and Gaza (and Ekron) as distinctively Philistine cities, and Jeremiah draws again on the idea that this group was connected to Caphtor. In this case, Jeremiah rephrased the concept. The "remnant of Caphtor" is not primarily a description of a place from which they came; it is a way of identifying the peoples themselves.

There is no reason to suggest that this connection to Caphtor was particularly important or meaningful to Amos or Jeremiah; it hardly mattered to them from where the Philistines came. Yet someone was carefully remembering this information. An important late Philistine inscription from Ekron helps us to see the rest of the story. In a famous seventh-century text found at the site, the name of the king is Ikausu, a name also used by the king of Gath in the history of David's rise to kingship (e.g., Achish in 1 Samuel 21:10). This name has been translated as "Achaean"—a term that, at least in the Homeric tradition, refers to the Aegean world in general.[7]

Some have tried to link this foreign name to the influence of contacts with the Aegean world in the later Iron Age but, from the standpoint of archaeology, this is a mirage. At the Philistine sites, even at the port of Ashkelon, there is a huge gap in the evidence for connections between the Aegean world and Philistia extending from the beginning of the "dark ages" in the middle of the 12th century through the very end of the seventh century. From the archaeological record, it appears that substantive connections to the Aegean only resume several decades after the Ekron text was inscribed.

Other scholars have been skeptical that the Iron Age peoples could remember a name or an Aegean connection for five centuries. And, no doubt, much was forgotten over the centuries. But now, with the genetic results from 12th-century Ashkelon paired with the texts of Amos and Jeremiah from the end of the Iron Age, it is certain that someone could and did accurately remember at least one key aspect of Philistine history—their origin.

As continued use of the name Ikausu suggests, the Philistines were proud of their origin, and, I would argue, they remembered the name Caphtor as well. Despite all the cultural and political changes and despite intermarriage, their shared memory retained this idea. The self-image of the eighth- and seventh-century Philistines was still rooted in a long-distant, but very real, immigrant experience that took place in the 12th century. Their memory of this event defined them as a social group from their beginning until their demise at the hand of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar in 604 B.C.E.*

The Philistines valued their distinctive origins, and, despite the vicissitudes of the Iron Age, their memory defined who they were. Only now, with ancient texts deciphered, ancient cities excavated, and ancient genomes decoded, can we begin to see the Philistines as they saw themselves. They were not merely the enemies of the Israelites. They were a proud immigrant people, defining themselves for almost 600 years as the "remnant of Caphtor," heirs of the Bronze Age Aegean.

[1] The ceramic connections have been developed in recent times with extraordinary precision in Penelope Mountjoy, *Decorated Pottery in Cyprus and Philistia in the 12th Century BC: Cypriot IIIC and Philistines IIIC*, vol. 1 (Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences, 2018).

[2] Lawrence E. Stager, "The Impact of the Sea Peoples (1185–1150 BCE)," in Thomas E. Levy, ed., *The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land* (New York: Facts on File, 1995), pp. 332–348; see also Assaf Yasur-Landau, *The Philistines and the Aegean Migration at the End of the Late Bronze Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2010), pp. 9–33.

[3] Guy D. Middleton, "Telling Stories: The Mycenaean Origins of the Philistines," *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 34.1 (2015), pp. 45–65; Ido Koch, "On Philistines and Early Israelite Kings: Memories and Perceptions," in Joachim J. Krause, Omer Sergi, and Kristin Weingart, eds., *Saul, Benjamin, and the Emergence of Monarchy in Israel: Biblical and Archaeological Perspectives* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2020), pp. 7–14.

[4] Michal Feldman et al., "Ancient DNA Sheds Light on the Genetic Origin of the Early Iron Age Philistines," *Science Advances* 5 (July 2019), pp. 1–10.

[5] See, e.g., Shlomo Bunimovitz and Zvi Lederman, "Migration, Hybridization, and Resistance: Identity Dynamics in the Early Iron Age Southern Levant," in A. Bernard Knapp and Peter van Dommelen, eds., *Hybridisation and Cultural Encounters* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2015), pp. 257–261.

[6] Shelley Wachsmann, *Aegeans in the Theban Tombs* (Leuven: Peeters, 1987); Eric H. Cline, *1177 B.C.: The Year Civilization Collapsed* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2014), pp. 44–49.

[7] See, e.g., Homer, *Iliad* 1.1–25; Seymour Gitin, Trude Dothan, and Joseph Naveh, "A Royal Dedicatory Inscription from Ekron," *Israel Exploration Journal* 47.1–2 (1997), p. 11.

* Lawrence E. Stager, "The Fury of Babylon: Ashkelon and the Archaeology of Destruction," **BAR**, January/February 1996.

Jesus in Arabia

Tracing the Spread of Christianity into the Desert

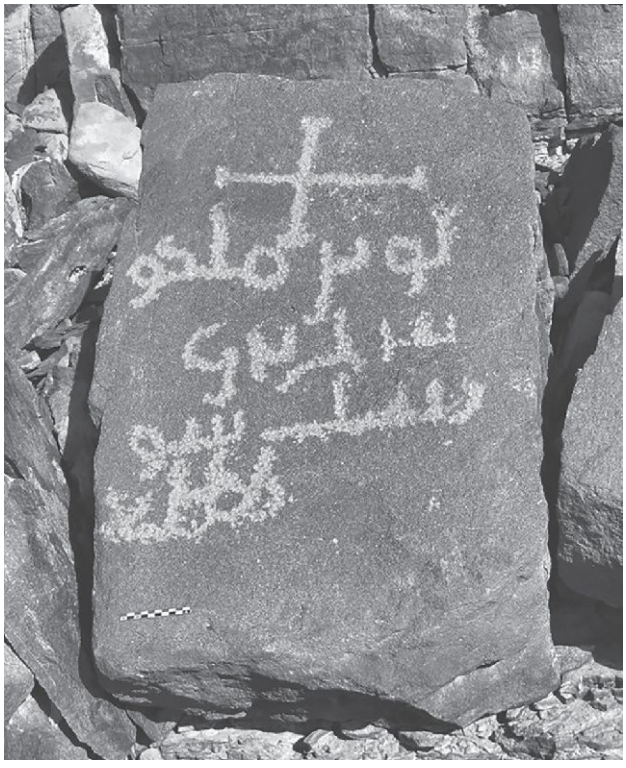
AHMAD AL-JALLAD

IN THE FOURTH CENTURY C.E., St. Jerome—the famed translator of the Bible into Latin—describes an encounter between the early Christian monastic St. Hilarion and the Arabs of Elusa (also known as Halutza), a trading center located southwest of the Dead Sea in the Negev desert. These "Saracens," as he described them, were devoted to the cult of the Morning Star (Venus). According to the tale, St. Hilarion began to work miracles, which caused the Arabs to abandon their idols and come to him to receive blessings. St. Hilarion called them to worship God alone; then he christened a former pagan holy man as their priest and sent them on their way.

Until recently, literary sources such as this constituted our only evidence for the penetration of Christianity into Arabia. By the sixth century, however, Christianity seems

AHMAD AL-JALLAD

THE ROCKY BASALT DESERT (*Harra*, in Arabic), which covers parts of southern Syria, northeastern Jordan, and northern Saudi Arabia, has for millennia been home to nomadic pastoralists. From the Iron Age to modern times, such groups have been using the rocky surfaces to record aspects of their daily life through inscriptions and rock art. This photo captures a landscape in northeastern Jordan; the stone is decorated with a hunting scene and an inscription in an indigenous alphabetic script called Safaitic, dated to around 2,000 years ago.



FROM CHRISTIAN J. ROBIN, ALI IBRAHIM AL-GHABBAN, AND SA'ĪD F. AL-SAʿĪD, "INSCRIPTIONS ANTIQUES DE LA RÉGION DE NAJRAN (ARABIE SÉOUDITE MÉRIDIONALE): NOUVEAUX JALONS POUR L'HISTOIRE DE L'ÉCRITURE, DE LA LANGUE ET DU CALENDRIER ARABES," *COMPTES RENDUS DE L'ACADÉMIE DES INSCRIPTIONS ET BELLES-LETTRES* (2014), P. 1043

THE EARLIEST ARABIAN CHRISTIANS left their unmistakable traces around the city of Najran, in southern Arabia. Dating to 470 C.E., this particular rock inscription, written in early Arabic script, commemorates one Thawban son of Malik and features a large cross. It attests to missionizing efforts among the Arabians that until recently have been known only from literary sources written by outsiders.

AHMAD AL-JALLAD

to have been firmly established across the peninsula, most notably in the city of Najran in southern Arabia, more than 1,200 miles from Elusa. The Quran, our primary source for the religious landscape of early seventh-century Arabia, often speaks to and engages with an Arabian Christian community. Indeed, Jesus is one of the most referenced biblical figures in the Quran (e.g., Q Maryam 19).

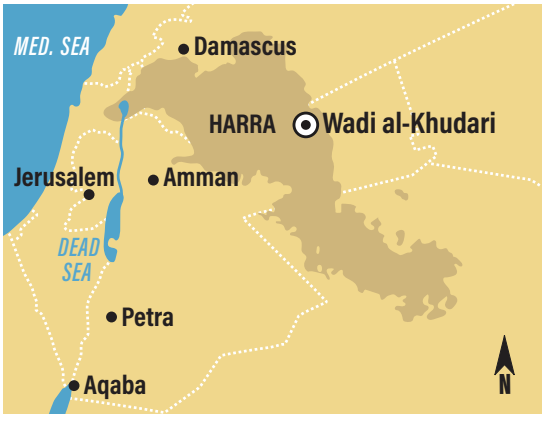
While literary sources written by outside peoples attest to missionizing among the Arabians in the gap between the fourth century and the rise of Islam, there was until recently little evidence of Christianity in historical sources from pre-Islamic Arabia itself. In 2014, a Saudi-French epigraphic mission discovered a number of fifth- or sixth-century Arabic inscriptions from a site north of Najran bearing crosses that are no doubt expressions of Christian identity, while a recently published Christian inscription from Dumat al-Jandal, a major caravan city in North Arabia, dates to 548/549 C.E.[1]

And indeed new monotheistic, possibly Christian, texts from western Arabia continue to be discovered. In fact, Arabia's epigraphic record, which extends back to the early first millennium B.C.E., attests to a petering off of paganism in the fourth century C.E. across the peninsula. Could this reflect the success of Christian missionaries in Arabia? Until recently, attestations of the spread of Christianity dating to the period described by St. Jerome had yet to come forth. But remarkable new evidence from Jordan's northeastern desert may change this.

East of the Hauran, a region situated east of the Golan, spanning from the Marj plain of Damascus in the north to the Jordanian steppe in the south, lies a basaltic expanse stretching from southern Syria into northern Saudi Arabia known as the Harra. The land was—and remains—home to nomadic pastoralists who hunted game, herded livestock, and raised camels. Its climate is harsh, with extremely hot summers and cold winters. Rainfall is little and concentrated between October and March with an annual average of 8–10 inches (200–250 mm) in the northern regions and as little as 2 inches (50 mm) in the south.[2]

The tribes that dwelt in this marginal environment left extensive archaeological remains, dating from the Neolithic to modern times. These include burial installations, animal enclosures, and campsites. But perhaps the most remarkable witness to the region's past is its epigraphic record, including inscriptions and rock art.

Writing came to the nomads of North Arabia as early as the beginning of the first millennium B.C.E. By the turn of the Common Era, the nomads of the Harra had mastered the written word. They carved tens of thousands of rock inscriptions in their local vernacular, an early dialect of Arabic, using an indigenous, consonantal alphabet, which modern scholars



ANIMAL ENCLOSURES in the rocky landscape of northeastern Jordan remain silent witnesses to the ancient lifeways in this inhospitable environment. The people here hunted wild animals but also herded livestock and raised camels. They also learned to write, and by the time Christianity was spreading across the Harra, they used the Safaitic script to record all sorts of texts in their local dialect of early Arabic. Shown here are undated stone structures, pens, and corrals still used by the region's nomadic inhabitants.

have called Safaitic.

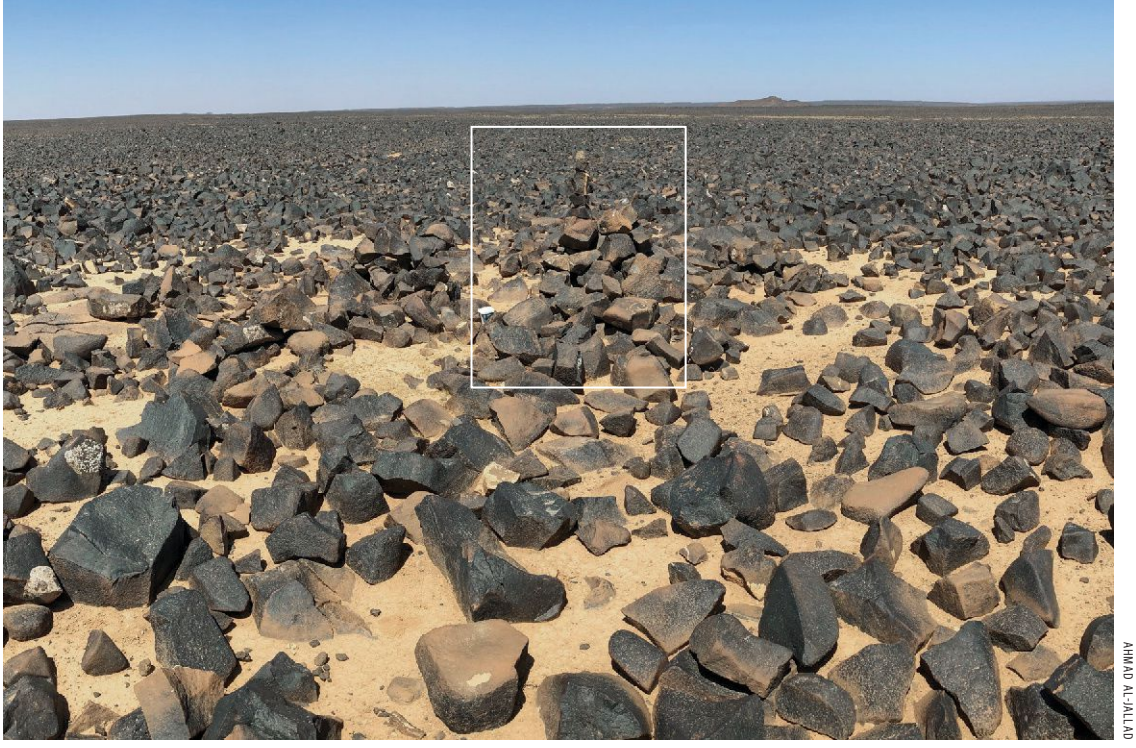
Safaitic belongs to a family of alphabets labeled the South Semitic script. These were employed in the Arabian Peninsula from as early as the late second millennium B.C.E. to the rise of Islam. This script family is a sister of the Phoenico-Aramaic script, both descending from the Proto-Sinaitic script sometime in the second millennium B.C.E.* The circumstances under which the South Semitic script spread from the Levant to Arabia remain shadowy, but by the middle of the first millennium B.C.E. varieties of the alphabet were used from Jordan to Yemen.

The Safaitic texts belong to many genres: funerary, commemorative, votive, etc. Some contain religious invocations, prayers for security and success, and curses upon enemies. Most texts, however, contain only personal names—commemorations of one's presence in a place.

* See Orly Goldwasser, "How the Alphabet Was Born from Hieroglyphs," **BAR**, March/April 2010; Matthieu Richelle, "A Very Brief History of Old Hebrew Script," **BAR**, Summer 2021.

Most Safaitic inscriptions contain no absolute chronological information, but a minority employ a dating formula using the word *sanat* ("year") followed by a description of an event, such as "the year the king of Nabatea died" or "the year Caesar announced the Province." Inscriptions such as these could date as early as the second century B.C.E. and continue to the third century C.E. The end of Safaitic documentation is unclear, but many scholars have suggested that the inscriptions terminate before the fourth century C.E., as there are no references to Christianity among the writings.

In 2019, I led an epigraphic survey to the Harra with Dr. Ali Al-Manaser of the Queen Rania Institute for Tourism and Heritage at the Hashemite University (Jordan). During our campaign, in a remote area known as Wadi al-Khudari, we discovered a small footpath that led to a dry seasonal lake. Following the path, we came upon a small cairn abounding with inscriptions—more than a hundred texts covered its stones. It seems that those using the lake in ancient times would camp by this cairn, and people who knew how to read and write would pass the time by carving inscriptions. Most of them were Safaitic, but a few Greek texts were also recorded. Many of the Safaitic texts described giving drink to animals and circumstances of drought, indicating that this was perhaps one of the final places of water during the dry season.



AHMAD AL-JALLAD

MORE THAN A HUNDRED texts were found inscribed on the stones of a single cairn (boxed above) in Wadi al-Khudari. Located near a seasonal lake, most inscriptions mention watering animals and might thus indicate that the lake retained water through much of the dry season.

One text especially stands out. The inscription is carved in a slightly different script style and sits apart from the rest on a partially buried stone. Its author identifies himself as Wahb-El, that is, "gift of god" in Arabic. He gives nine generations of his genealogy and then adds a memorial text, grieving for his uncle whom he describes as belonging to the tribe of Ashlal ("and he grieved for his maternal uncle the Ashlalite").

The inscription reads like a typical Safaitic composition, until we pay close attention to the wording of the closing invocation: *h ʿsy nṣr-h m-kfr-k*, "O Īsay (*ʿsy*) help him against those who deny you." In this sentence, the word *ʿsy* follows the vocative particle *h* (Arabic: hā), which is commonly used in Safaitic to begin an address to a deity. This shows then that *ʿsy* was understood as a divine name (perhaps pronounced Īsay in the Safaitic dialect), though one

Words from the Desert

Examples of Safaitic Inscriptions

l wdmʾl bn grmʾl bn nḫr bn ġrb h-ṣmd w ḏbḥ gml ʿl-h f slm yṯʿ m-śnʾ w ʿwr m ʿwr h-ʾsfr

By Wadam-El son of Garm-El son of Nakhr son of Ghorayb, at the high place, and he sacrificed a camel upon it so, O Yaythe', grant security from enemies and blind whosoever effaces these writings.

l bgt bn ʿdy bn lśms w nṣb w ḏbḥ

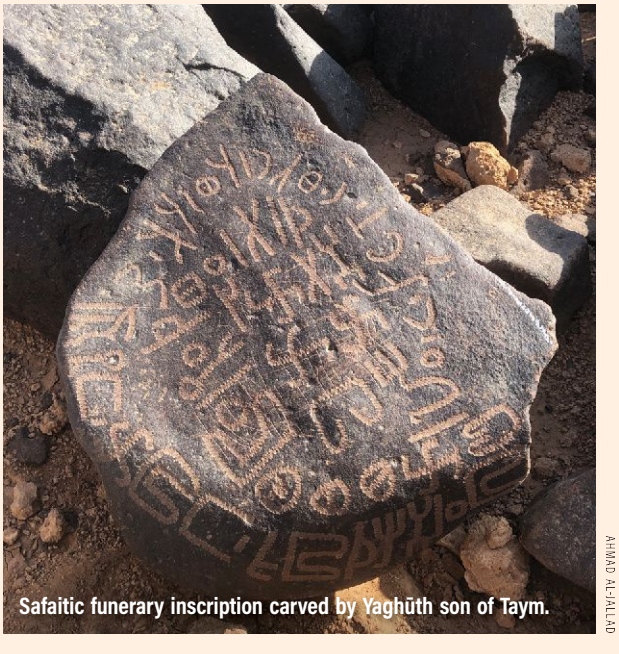
By Baggat son of ʿĀdeyy son of Le-Shams and he set up a cult stone and performed an animal sacrifice.

l lḥy h-nfst

This funerary monument belongs to Loḥayy.

l yġṯ bn tm bn kmd ḏ ʾl ʿmrt w wgm ʿl-ṣʿd w ʿl-ḫld ʿḫt-h trḥt

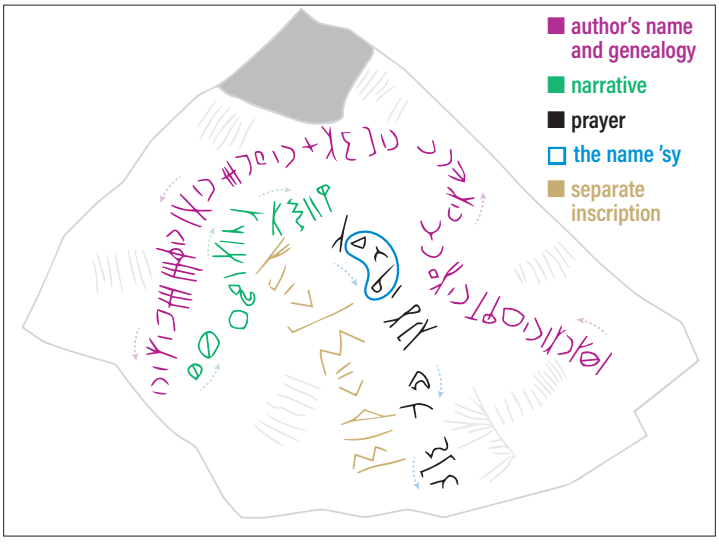
By Yaghūth son of Taym son of Komayd of the lineage of ʿAmarat, and he grieved for Sa'd and for Khald his sister who had perished. [Text pictured at right.]



Safaitic funerary inscription carved by Yaghūth son of Taym.

AHMAD AL-JALLAD

COURTESY OF THE BADIA EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY PROJECT



JESUS WAS (WORSHIPED) HERE. Among the inscriptions found in Wadi al-Khudari was this memorial text (the drawing identifies the various elements that make up the unique inscription). Its author, Wahb-El, closes his remembrance with a prayer invoking a divine entity called *'sy*, likely pronounced Īsay. Astonishingly, such spelling corresponds to the name of Jesus as found in the Quran. Is this the earliest known reference in Arabia to Jesus?

previously unattested in the Safaitic inscriptions. The consonantal spelling of *'sy* (with the letters *ayin-sin-yod*) does correspond to the name of Jesus as found in the Quran (*'ysy*, pronounced Īsē or Īsā, depending on the reading tradition). Could this be the first attestation of Jesus in Safaitic and our earliest reference within Arabia to Jesus?

Wahb-El calls upon Īsay to "help him" (*nṣr-h*) against "those who deny you" (*kfr-k*). Such a prayer seems quite out of place in a pagan Arabian context, where the "denial" of a deity has not been previously attested as an offense among thousands of recorded prayer texts. Both verbs, *nṣr* and *kfr*, are part and parcel of Christian vocabulary but virtually unattested in other Safaitic inscriptions. Indeed, the "denial" of Christ is a sin and established reproach in a Christian context.

If this interpretation is correct, then the present inscription may be the earliest attestation of Christ in Arabia, clearly predating the fifth- and sixth-century Arabic inscriptions discussed above. But how old is it? The text is undated, but if we consider that the latest Safaitic inscriptions date to the third century, it would seem likely that the present text was produced during the final phase of Safaitic documentation, perhaps dating to the same period as the tale of St. Hilarion.

The Safaitic context of *'sy* also helps us understand the enigmatic etymology of the name in Arabic. The seventh-century Quranic form of Jesus's name, *'ysy* (Īsē or Īsā), has long puzzled scholars as it does not reflect a straight-forward adoption of the Hebrew-Aramaic Yeshua into Arabic. Scholars have offered various attempts at explaining *'ysy*, from confusion on the part

AHMAD AL-JALLAD

ANCIENT MISSIONARIES? Inscriptions in the Greek language and alphabet might point to the presence of Greek-speaking missionaries who preached to the local, Safaitic-writing nomads of the Harra. This isolated Greek graffito records the name Nestor.

of Muhammed to far-fetched sound changes as the word passed from a hypothetical form of Aramaic into Arabic. The presence of *ʿsy* in Safaitic disqualifies all these explanations. In fact, within Safaitic texts, Īsay appears frequently as a regular personal name as well, though in inscriptions that were clearly written by pagan authors, as in the following text from the Syrian Harra, just north of our area:

l qdm bn ʿsy w h rḍw ʾws-h
By Qadam son of Īsay; O Roḍaw (an ancient Arabian god) grant him a boon.

So how did this pre-Islamic Arabian name become the name of Jesus in Arabic? Perhaps a clue lies in the way the nomads were initially converted to Christianity. If we return to Jerome's account, St. Hilarion does not seem to have provided any theological instruction to the Saracens who accepted Christianity. Rather, conversion was often simply a matter of grafting the new onto the old.[3] The nomads would have learned the basic elements of Christian monotheism and returned to their business in the desert, leaving a lot of room for religious syncretism.

While the pagan gods are frequently invoked for deliverance, Jesus would have been distinguished by the redemptive aspect of his salvation. This salient theological difference could have motivated the phonosemantic matching (a process of loaning a word by equating it with a similar sounding and meaning word in the adopting language) of the name Yeshua with a pre-existing Arabic name Īsay, which likely meant "ransomer" or "redeemer." Indeed, the root *ʿsy* means "to purchase" or "to acquire" in several languages of ancient Arabia. A similar name is found in modern Arabic: Fadi ("ransomer"), derived from the root *fdy*, "to ransom."

The grafting of the new upon the old is embodied in the inscription itself. The present text is a typical Safaitic composition, but the old gods and prayers are replaced by a Christian invocation. Wahb-El may therefore have been a convert who modified the Safaitic writing tradition to accommodate his new faith, invoking Jesus with the same formulaic structure used to invoke the old gods.

Wahb-El's text may be precious evidence of the earliest penetration of Christianity into Arabia, but the exact circumstances that brought the faith to the basalt desert remain unclear. Wahb-El may have had close contacts with settled areas, such as Bostra in Syria or the cities of the Decapolis in Transjordan, which appear in other Safaitic texts. On the other hand, it is possible that his inscription reflects the efforts of missionaries to convert the nomads. Although we have no literary accounts describing such attempts in the Harra, the desert's proximity to centers of Christianity would have certainly attracted proselytizers. Indeed, one finds strewn about the Harra isolated Greek graffiti, sometimes with clear expressions of Christianity. Are these the traces of ancient missionaries who preached to the local, Safaitic-writing nomads?

For now, the identification of Wahb-El's text as the earliest witness to Arabian Christianity must remain a tantalizing possibility until future discoveries provide further examples of Christianity inscribed in Safaitic.[4]

[1] Christian J. Robin, Ali Ibrahim Al-Ghabbān, and Saīd F. Al-Saīd, "Inscriptions Antiques de la Région de Najrān (Arabie Séoudite Méridionale): Nouveaux Jalons pour l'Histoire de l'Écriture, de la Langue et du Calendrier Arabes," *Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (2014), pp. 1033–1128; Laïla Nehmé, "New Dated Inscriptions (Nabataean and pre-Islamic Arabic) from a Site Near al-Jawf, Ancient Dūmah, Saudi Arabia," *Arabian Epigraphic Notes* 3 (2017), pp. 121–164.

[2] Peter Akkermans, "Living on the Edge or Forced into the Margins? Hunter-Herders in Jordan's Northeastern Badlands in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods," *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology and Heritage Studies* 7.4 (2019), pp. 412–431.

[3] Konstantin Klein, "How to Get Rid of Venus: Some Remarks on Jerome's *Vita Hilarionis* and the Conversion of Elusa in the Negev," in Arietta Papacostantinou, Niel Mclynn, and Daniel Schwartz, eds., *Conversion in Late Antiquity* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2015), pp. 241–266.

[4] For the complete publication of this inscription, see Ahmad Al-Jallad and Ali Al-Manaser, "The pre-Islamic Divine Name ʿsy and the Background of the Qurʾanic Jesus," *Journal of the International Qurʾanic Studies Association* 6 (forthcoming).

RECONSTRUCTION: HARVARD MUSEUM OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST AND ESTATE OF L.E. STAGER; ILLUSTRATION: C.S. ALEXANDER

Storage and Staples in Biblical Israel

TIM FRANK

IN 1942, EARL TUPPER created his first bell-shaped storage container. A few years later, Tupperware was introduced to the public and changed the way we store the things we eat. But how did people in ancient Israel and Judah store their food?

Storage jars have been excavated in great quantities from sites throughout Israel. In addition, storage installations, such as pits, storage rooms, and storage bins, have been unearthed. Looking at food storage broadly and comparing storage practices offers us a window into household organization and life.

I first became interested in household food storage when I studied a food preparation area at Tel Halif, a prominent site in southern Israel likely to be identified with biblical Rimmon (Joshua 15:32; 19:7).* At Tel Halif, we were able to establish where different items would have originally been placed within a house—before its sudden destruction

* See Cynthia Shafer-Elliott, "Baking Bread in Ancient Judah," **BAR**, July/August/September/October 2019.

ABOVE: A SNAPSHOT OF DAILY LIFE. In ancient Israel, extended families typically lived together in a *bet 'ab* ("father's house"), a cluster of houses that shared a common living area. This reconstruction drawing shows what a *bet 'ab* could have looked like and some of the everyday activities that families would have performed, including grinding flour, tending animals, and processing and storing goods.

WERNER FORMAN ARCHIVE/LOCATION: 107/HIP/ART RESOURCE, NY

WINE MAKING AND STORAGE. Egyptian art often represented food storage, with the food or drink shown alongside the storage vessel. In this painting from the Tomb of Nakht, dating to the 18th Dynasty (c. 1550–1295 B.C.E.), grapes are being trodden to extract the juice (left). The juice is draining out (bottom right) and being put into storage jars (top right).

by the Assyrians. Storage jars were found beside other artifacts, such as an oven and a grinding installation, but also put together in little groups. The location of storage jars and other items was not random; there was purpose in how the household was organized.

The study of food storage is part of "household archaeology," a field of study with some established, though contested, methods to recognize patterns at the household level. Artifacts and their particular setting in the house are considered in detail to determine "activity areas." Traditional households from related cultures provide some comparison in determining the possible use of space.

Modern ethnographic accounts allow us to interpret artifacts, recognize activity areas, and suggest how different activities would have been part of household organization. Other relevant information from ethnographic sources must be treated with more caution—because ideas and ways of life have changed over the millennia. Nevertheless, such information should encourage us to look at the significance and meaning of household food storage in the ancient world. Gustaf Dalman, for instance, observed and described the life of Palestine's peasant farmers in the early 20th century. He related his observations to important aspects of daily life in the ancient world, particularly the biblical period, describing in detail the storage of grains, legumes, oil, wine, processed fruit, dairy products, and water.

In early 20th-century Palestine, grain was most commonly stored in chests made from unfired clay or mud. The fact that the name used for these storage chests in southern Palestine (Arabic: *habie*) was used in the north to describe a ceramic storage jar shows that pottery jars were once commonly used to store grain. It may also suggest that

across time words sometimes follow the function of an item, rather than the form.

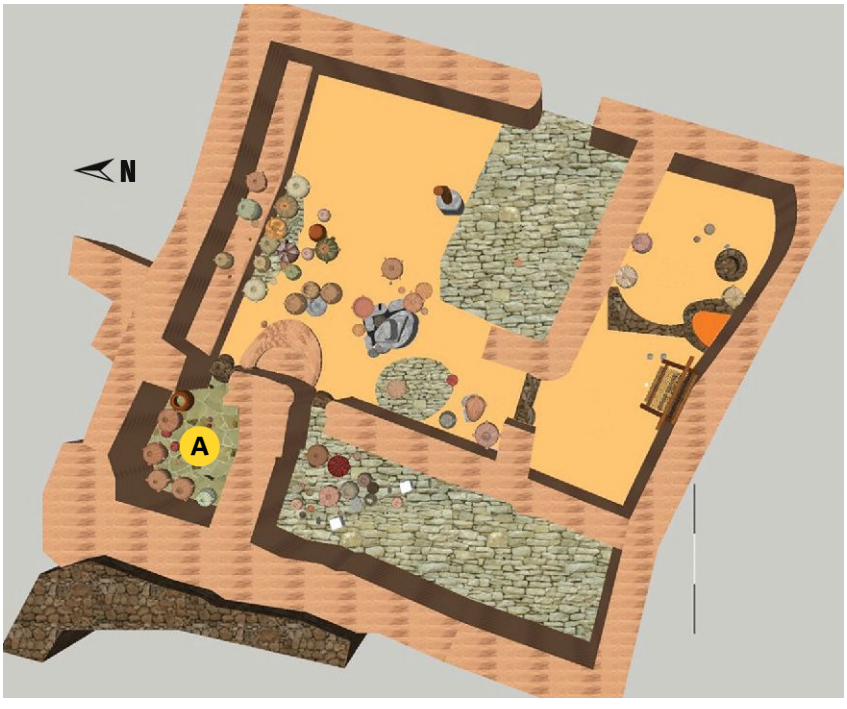
When we consider ethnographic descriptions from various parts of the Middle East, such as Cyprus, Iran, Syria, Jordan, or Egypt, we find both differences and commonalities between these various traditional households.

To supplement the ethnographic studies and bridge the gap to the ancient world, we need to turn to written and iconographic sources.

The Mishnah and Talmud provide information about household food storage in the late Roman period (second–fifth centuries C.E.). Although the aim of the Mishnah is to provide rules for the right interpretation of biblical law, not to describe daily life, conclusions can be drawn about household food storage from what the texts imply. Written mostly in Hebrew, the Mishnah contains many indigenous words that denote storage vessels, but it often interchanges the Hebrew terms with words drawn from other languages, such as Greek, making it sometimes difficult to correlate precisely specific vessels and their names. Over time, the specific objects to which words refer may have changed, but the more general function of those objects remained. The Mishnah emphasizes adequate control over stored produce so that it would be "clean." This was the responsibility of the male head of the household, who had to ensure that his household adhered to the precepts of the law.

Greek and Egyptian sources stress the different responsibilities of the husband and the wife in food storage. While it mainly was the responsibility of the husband to bring in foodstuffs from the field, it was the responsibility of the wife to organize the stored food in the house. In Greece, storage jars as well as sacks were used to store grain.

Artistic portrayals of food storage appear throughout the ancient Near East. Figurines from the Levant and Cyprus show food containers particularly in relation to transport. Pottery jars were frequently used to transport liquids, and therefore household storage in similar vessels is likely. Donkeys also carried baskets and sacks, suggesting that some produce was kept at least for the short term in these containers. Chests (probably wooden) modeled in Cyprus may have been used for household storage, but it is not clear that they were used for food storage.



RECONSTRUCTIONS COURTESY TIM FRANK

DIGITAL DEPICTIONS. These digital reproductions reconstruct a typical Iron Age II house at Tel Halif in southern Israel, as revealed by recent excavation. The top image shows the house's plan and the different areas for living and domestic activity, such as food preparation, cooking, and storage. At right are storage vessels that would have been used within the household and stored in a side room (labeled A on top image). Storage jars, a large cooking jug, several juglets, and a bowl are visible.

Egyptian art abounds with portrayals of royally administered food storage, where the produce is clearly shown alongside the means of storage. Liquids, such as wine, beer, and honey, were stored in pottery jars. Meat and fruit were also stored in jars. Bowls were used for spices and cakes. Barley, wheat, and beans were stored in bulk. Bulk storage may occur in compartments or rooms in houses, special storehouses, domed silos, or heaps protected by earthen ramps and branches.

References to food storage also appear in the Hebrew Bible, most frequently in the context of blessings and curses. To have full storage bins is a blessing; to have empty storage bins is a curse (e.g., Leviticus 26:10; Deuteronomy 28:4–8; Psalm 144:13; Proverbs 3:9–10; Joel 1:17; Haggai 2:19). These blessings and curses relate particularly to the storage in individual households as part of the whole people of Israel. This understanding is present in books across different genres and time periods. Food storage is also mentioned in relation to royal administration, but this is a particular feature of late biblical books, such as Chronicles.

It is not possible to associate the terms in the Hebrew Bible with particular vessel forms or functions known from archaeology. Nevertheless, the biblical references allow us to determine the broad meaning of the different terms. They indicate that vessels were considered very common household items and that putting one's crop in jars and storing them gave a sense of permanence and living in the land.

In the books of Samuel, gifts of food (kept in a variety of containers) play a key role in defining and establishing social relations. They may be seen as a transition between food storage for subsistence and a more centralized administration of food storage.

Turning now to the archaeological record, archaeologists can recognize different activity areas, based on the reported finds. These include food preparation areas, food consumption areas, living rooms, domestic work areas, food storage areas, goods storage areas, fodder and fuel storage, stables, agricultural production areas, and craft production areas. Through analogy with ethnographic reports, most excavated spaces fit one of these categories, and most excavated houses have food

ZEV RADOVAN/BIBLELANDPICTURES.COM

HOUSEHOLD POTTERY FROM DAN. This assemblage of Israelite storage, cooking, and serving vessels comes from Tel Dan in northern Israel and dates to the Iron Age I period (1200–1000 B.C.E.). Pottery such as this would have been common in houses throughout the region and used in everyday cooking and food storage activities.

ZEV RADOVAN/BIBLELANDPICTURES.COM

BELONGING TO THE KING. BAR readers will be familiar with *lmlk* jars, found in store cities throughout southern Judah and typically dated to the time of King Hezekiah (729–686 B.C.E.). Stamped on their handles with the Hebrew phrase *lmlk*—"belonging to the king"—and featuring the two-winged sun disc, an early symbol of the Israelite monarchy, these jars contained goods that were set aside for use or distribution by the royal authorities.

preparation and food storage areas.

Detailed investigation of house spaces and vessels from 22 buildings at 13 sites in the territory of ancient Israel and Judah allows for the following generalizations:

Houses from the Iron Age I (1200–1000 B.C.E., before the Israelite monarchy) had greater overall storage capacity than houses from the Iron Age II (1000–586 B.C.E., during the monarchy), especially if outside storage pits are taken into account. During the Iron Age II, there were more storehouses and storage facilities that were presumably centrally administered. This indicates that there was a shift between the Iron Age I and the Iron Age II from subsistence living to more redistributive storage. Exactly how this redistributive storage was administered cannot be determined from archaeological material alone.

Another difference between Iron Age I and Iron Age II houses was the size of the storage vessels. Houses had a similar number of vessels per area, but the jars from the Iron Age I were larger. Nevertheless, significant amounts of foodstuffs could still be stored in houses from the Iron Age II, indicating that household food storage remained important.

Most houses had separate food storage areas, often in side or back rooms. Nevertheless, considerable amounts of food were also stored in food preparation areas. Apart from their marginal location in houses, food storage rooms were no different in size or architecture to any other rooms, suggesting that they were not specifically built as storage rooms. In addition, there is evidence in some houses that the use of rooms changed over time.

There is normally little indication of storage jars' contents. Large holemouth jars were often associated with grinding installations, indicating that they contained grain or legumes. But they were also found in other locations. There is some association between *lmlk*-type jars (jars similar to those with handles stamped with the phrase *lmlk*—"[belonging] to the king") and wine storage, but these jars also seem to have stored other products. Many of these jars, including stamped jars, were found in what seem to be normal small households.

Because storage containers made of organic material—such as sacks, skins, and baskets—generally do not survive, any conclusions can be only tentative. While storage chests may have been used in ancient Israel and Judah, no remains have been found, suggesting that if they were present they might have been wooden, not made of dried mud or clay as was common in later millennia. There is some evidence of storage bins made out of stone slabs and of indoor storage pits—in addition to the well-known outdoor storage pits. A room partitioned off to enable storage of grain is another example of a storage practice.

We can learn a few other things about food storage in ancient Israel and Judah from archaeology. The location of stored food inside the house points to strong domestic control over food, separate from direct shared control by other households or some higher authority. Households were at least partially autonomous in relation to food supply, even though community storage in the Iron Age I and redistributive storage in the Iron Age II point to a dependence on and cooperation with wider society.

The constant presence of food storage among many other household activities points to a clear awareness of food security and the relative precariousness of food supply. The strong association of food storage with food preparation may also indicate at least partial control by women over the household food supply, contributing to our understanding of gender roles in the household.

Storage jars are not just interesting artifacts. If we read them together with ancient texts and art, they can tell us something about the cares and concerns, the hopes and fears of ancient people—including the people of ancient Israel and Judah.

PROOF POSITIVE

How We Used Math to Find Herod's Palace at Banias

FRANKIE SNYDER AND **RACHEL BAR-NATHAN**

Nestled on a wooded hillside above the cool waters of the Hermon Stream in the Golan Heights lie the ruins of Banias (ancient Caesarea Philippi). They include the remains of a rectangular building, partially hewn out of bedrock. The building is supported by a series of concrete walls decorated with *opus reticulatum*, a design with diamond or net-like patterns that was common in Roman architecture of the first centuries B.C.E. and C.E. This distinctive decoration caught the attention of Ehud Netzer, the late archaeologist and Herodian architectural expert, who excavated at Banias for two short seasons in

KNOWN IN ANTIQUITY as Caesarea Philippi, the site of Banias, located in the picturesque landscape south of Mt. Hermon at the headwaters of the Hermon Stream, features an array of archaeological treasures, including a sacred grotto to the Greek god Pan (cave in the cliff), several temples (foreground), and a mysterious monumental structure about 100 yards to the west (near the rectangular platform in the center) that dates to the early Roman period. While excavator Ehud Netzer argued this structure might be a temple built by Herod the Great to honor Caesar Augustus, a new look at some long-forgotten finds suggests the building may have had a very different function.

DUBY TAL/ALBATROSS/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

1977 and 1978 to determine the structure's function and builder.*

Only two other sites from Roman Palestine have substantial remains of *opus reticulatum* walls: Herod's Third Palace at Jericho and the so-called Herod's Monument (or mausoleum) in Jerusalem, just north of the Old City's Damascus Gate.** Both were built during the time of King Herod the Great, probably by visiting construction crews from Rome. Netzer logically concluded that the building on the hillside in Banias also should be associated with King Herod. But do these assumptions hold up to the available historical and archaeological evidence? And if the building was the work of King Herod, what do we know about its use?

* Ehud Netzer, "A Third Candidate: Another Building at Banias," **BAR**, September/October 2003.

** Ehud Netzer, "*BAR* Readers Restore and Preserve Herodian Jericho," **BAR**, November/December 1978; Ehud Netzer, "Herod's Family Tomb in Jerusalem," **BAR**, May/June 1983.

EHUD NETZER'S ARCHIVES

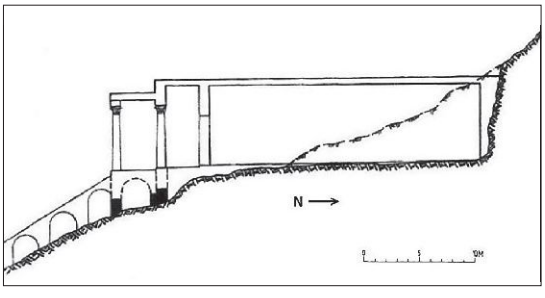
EHUD NETZER'S ARCHIVES

Interestingly, the site's Arabic name, Banias, derives from the Greek Paneias (or Paneion)—a shrine dedicated to Pan, the god of nature and woodlands, hunters and shepherds. And, indeed, a large grotto for Pan cuts into the steep mountain at Banias, at the foot of Mt. Hermon. Beside the grotto of Pan are niches hewn in the rock in honor of the gods Pan, Echo, and Hermes. On the lower terrace are the remains of several temples and open-air cult platforms. From a spring below the grotto gushes the Hermon Stream, one of the three sources of the Jordan River, which lingers below in a series of pools.

The Roman historian Josephus records that in 20 B.C.E. Caesar Augustus granted Herod authority over this region, and Herod erected at Banias a temple in honor of the Roman emperor:

> And when [Herod] returned home after escorting Caesar to the sea, he erected to him a very beautiful temple of white stone in the territory of Zenodorus, near the place called Paneion. In the mountains here there is a beautiful cave, and below it the earth slopes steeply to a precipitous and inaccessible depth, which is filled with still water, while above it there is a very high mountain. Below the cave rise the sources of the river Jordan. It was this most celebrated place that Herod further adorned with the temple he consecrated to Caesar.
>
> (*Antiquities* 15.363–364)

Is the hillside building with *opus reticulatum* walls—located just 100 yards from Pan's



FRANKIE SNYDER

EHUD NETZER, *THE ARCHITECTURE OF HEROD THE GREAT BUILDER* (TÜBINGEN, 2006), FIG. 49

THE PUZZLING BUILDING at Banias was excavated in the late 1970s. One end of this long rectangular structure was carved out of the adjacent mountainside while the other end was built atop a monumental platform and entryway supported by walls and arches constructed in net-like patterns known as *opus reticulatum*. This construction technique was common to monumental buildings of the early Roman period and is found in a number of sites associated with Herod the Great, including Herod's Third Palace at Jericho.

THE PANEION, an ancient sanctuary dedicated to the Greek god Pan, features a grotto to Pan (at left) along with several rock-carved niches that honor other gods, including Echo and Hermes. The Roman historian Josephus mentions the Paneion and its beautiful setting when describing the location of the grand temple that Herod had built for Caesar Augustus.

grotto—the temple described by Josephus,* or is it something else entirely?[1]

Herod frequently chose dramatic locations and reshaped the natural environment for his building projects. The architectural remains explored by Netzer at Banias show precisely those signature features. The limited excavations on the elongated terrace about 50 feet above the Hermon Stream revealed parts of a long rectangular hall (measuring about 90 by 40 ft), entered from the south. The north wall of the *opus reticulatum* building was cut into the natural mountain slope. In the northeast corner of the hall, the wall reaches 16 feet above the bedrock floor, an indication of just how much rock was removed to carve the hall into the cliff face. Both faces of the building's east wall were finely carved, suggesting there was perhaps another room to the east. More walls to the west and northwest of the hall suggest even more rooms in that direction.

The Banias hall, carved deep into the cliff face and supported with retaining walls, is reminiscent of Herod's Northern Palace at Masada, where the two lower terraces were hewn directly from the natural rock and buttressed with additional walls. This is another architectural clue that links the Banias edifice to King Herod.

Small and long forgotten, there is another piece of archaeological evidence from Banias that might link the site with Herod. Scattered about the excavations were approximately 170 small geometrically cut tiles and their fragments that once created an elegantly patterned floor known as *opus sectile* (see p. 56). Meaning "cut work" in Latin, the floor was patterned with triangular, square, and octagonal shapes. Some of the pieces were cut from black bitumen quarried near the Dead Sea, while others were cut from a wide array of imported multicolored marble, alabaster, and granite.

Although Netzer recognized these as parts of a floor, there were no clues as to their original

* Some propose that this temple is located in Omrit, about 3 miles southwest of Banias; see J. Andrew Overman, Jack Olive, and Michael Nelson, "Discovering Herod's Shrine to Augustus: Mystery Temple Found at Omrit," **BAR**, March/April 2003.

Opus Sectile

Decorative *opus sectile* floors first appeared in the fourth century B.C.E., in Greek architecture, and by the late second century were adopted by the Romans. Marble (from quarries around the Mediterranean) became fashionable in *opus sectile* floors in the mid-first century. Floors of this style were considered more prestigious than regular mosaic floors, and Herod the Great used them in the more important areas of his palaces, especially in public areas, such as *triclinia* (dining rooms) and bathhouses. Evidence for *opus sectile* floors comes from Herodian palaces at Cyprus, Caesarea Maritima, Herodium, Jericho, Machaerus, Masada, and Tiberias, and from the Temple Mount.*

* See, e.g., Győző Vörös, "Anastylosis at Machaerus," **BAR**, January/February 2015; Frankie Snyder, Gabriel Barkay, and Zachi Dvira, "What the Temple Mount Floor Looked Like," **BAR**, November/December 2016.

FRANKIE SNYDER

arrangement. Therefore, they were put aside in a box, and it was 35 years before archaeologists took a second look at them. Astonishingly, this "box of rocks" holds vital clues to the identification of the enigmatic structure and its builder.

The *opus sectile* tiles found in the *opus reticulatum* building at Banias are consistent in size, shape, color, material, and craftsmanship with those found in Herodian structures. The black bitumen was quarried near Nebi Musa, just northwest of the Dead Sea. The imported stones were the same ones popular in *opus sectile* floors in villas and palaces in ancient Rome and Pompeii—pink, gray, red, purple, and greenish marbles and striped alabasters from Greece and Asia Minor; pink granite from Egypt; and bright yellow stones from Tunisia. The bedrock within the Banias hall was leveled to create the *opus sectile* floor, but archaeologists found no tiles still in place. Only a few impressions of large square tiles remain in the ancient gray plaster along the north wall, but they do not match the squares, triangles, and octagons excavated at the site.

So where do we go from here? We turn to mathematics!

When I (Frankie Snyder) was invited in 2013 by Rachel Bar-Nathan, a member of the original excavation team, to help solve the puzzle of the Banias floor, I noticed that the square tile impressions along the north wall at Banias are the same size as those around the outer edges of the *triclinium* (dining room) in Herod's Third Palace at Jericho. Could there be more similarities between the two floors that may help us reconstruct the vanished floor at Banias?

FRANKIE SNYDER

DOZENS OF CUT STONE PIECES, including marble, alabaster, and granite, were excavated from the *opus reticulatum* building at Banias. Found in various shapes and sizes, the multicolored pieces once created a decorative floor but, not knowing how the pieces fit together, archaeologists stored them away in boxes, forgotten until 2013, when our authors decided to take a second look.

FASCINATING FLOOR. Incorporating 58 stone tiles and fragments, the proposed geometric design (left) may have once decorated the main hall of the *opus reticulatum* building at Banias. Known as *opus sectile* ("cut work," in Latin), such intricate mosaics were a regular feature of monumental, ceremonial, and elite buildings in the early Roman period, including Herod the Great's Third Palace at Jericho.

A close examination of the *opus sectile* floors in several Herodian palaces revealed five characteristics, or "rules of construction," that all these floors have in common:

1. Measurements are based on the Roman foot (11.65 inches).
2. Tile shapes include squares, triangles, hexagons, octagons, rhombi, and rectangles.
3. Each side of a tile borders a tile of a contrasting color.
4. The patterns are popular Roman patterns or close variations.
5. The pattern can be easily repeated over a large area.

When I applied these observations to the tiles and fragments from Banias, I was able to create a working pattern (see sidebar at right for the step-by-step process). Although it is not a reconstruction of any actual segment of the original floor, this pattern works and shows how the original floor probably looked.

This proposed *opus sectile* is remarkably similar to the central pattern of the *triclinium* in Herod's Third Palace at Jericho (see p. 58). While the Banias pattern alternates black triangles with multicolored squares, triangles, and octagons, the Jericho example alternates black triangles with multicolored squares, triangles, and rhombi. Both patterns also include groupings of tiles that form squares and octagons. In the Banias pattern, the squares are made up of smaller tiles, and the octagons are left

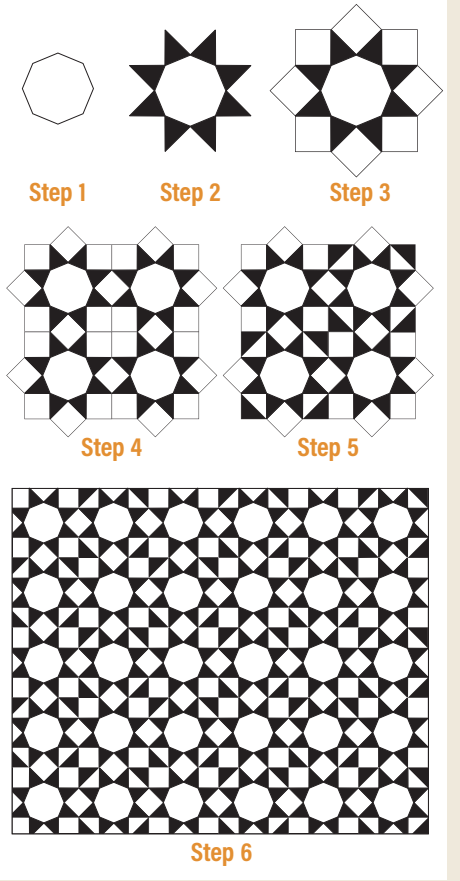
Reconstructing the Banias Floor

Step 1: Begin with the tile that has the greatest number of sides, the octagon.

Step 2: Because only the base of the black triangle matches the length of the octagon's individual sides, arrange eight black triangles around the multicolor octagon. This creates a 90-degree angle between each pair of black triangles.

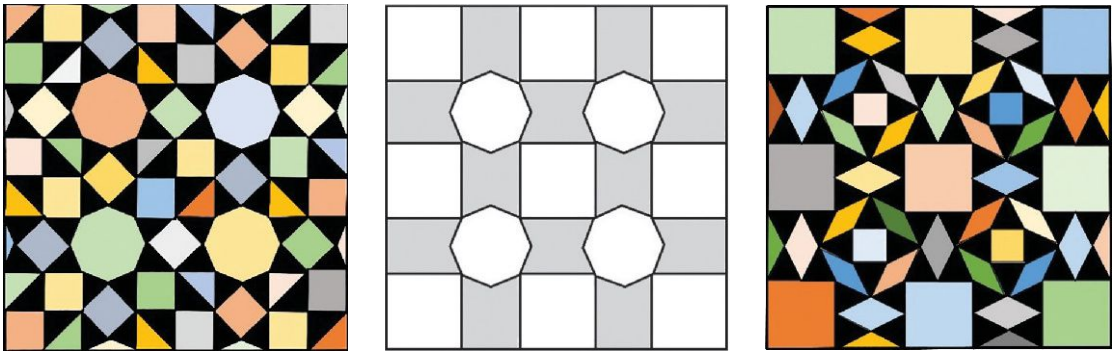
Step 3: Since only the smaller multicolor squares fit in that space, arrange those between each pair of black triangles. The result is the basic pattern module: an eight-pointed star, which was a popular motif in the Roman Empire .

Step 4: Repeat that pattern on all four sides of the first module, overlapping some of the squares.



Step 5: Notice a problem? Some of the squares abut other squares of the same color, contrary to the rule that each side of a tile must border with a tile of contrasting color. Remedy: Cut such squares in half along the diagonal, thus creating two isosceles right triangles (triangle with right angle between two sides of equal length); then replace either with a black one. This solution also accounts for the presence of isosceles right triangles in both black and multicolored materials found at Banias.

Step 6: The modified module can be replicated indefinitely, to create a large floor. The resulting effect is worthy of King Herod the Great.



FRANKIE SNYDER

THE BANIAS FLOOR DESIGN (left) shares some fundamental features with floor patterns known from Herod the Great's Third Palace at Jericho (right). Herod's architects seemingly worked from a common design template of repeating squares and octagons (center) that could then be adapted and manipulated to create new, original patterns. The similarity in flooring design is one indication that the Banias building was not a temple, as Netzer suspected, but rather a royal palace of Herod the Great. In these drawings, colors have been assigned arbitrarily but are meant to help readers identify the patterns.

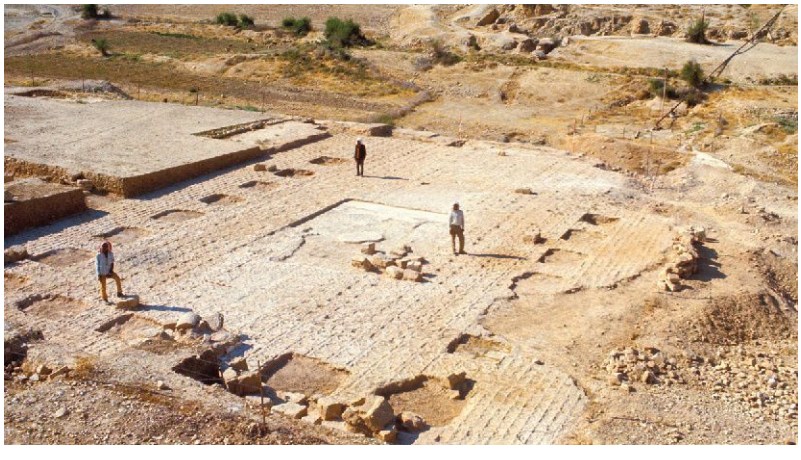
whole. In Jericho, the octagons are divided into smaller tiles, and the squares are left whole. Finally, the Banias pattern is created by repeating and overlapping eight-pointed stars, while the Jericho pattern has repeating and overlapping four-pointed stars, creating an amazing optical illusion.

These two unique floors are very similar in overall design, pattern generation, and materials. They may have been conceived and created by the same artist and produced by the same masonry team. And since the Jericho palace demonstrably belonged to King Herod the Great, the floor at Banias seems to indicate that Herod was responsible for that construction as well.

Ehud Netzer wondered whether the *opus reticulatum* building at Banias was Herod's temple to Augustus mentioned by Josephus. He reconstructed the building as a rectangular temple with a small portico opening onto a colonnade. It was approached from the south by an arched stairway leading up the hill from the level area of the Hermon Stream below. Based on its *opus reticulatum* walls, Netzer dated the Banias building to the time of King Herod the Great, after 15 B.C.E. But because the Banias *opus sectile* floor shows so many similarities to the *triclinium* floor in Herod's Third Palace at Jericho, we suggest a different interpretation: Rather than a temple dedicated to the emperor, the Banias hall was likely a *triclinium* or reception hall.

There are several other similarities between Banias and Jericho, besides their *opus reticulatum* walls, *opus sectile* floors, and arched stairways. The Banias building is about the same size as the Jericho *triclinium*, though somewhat narrower. The colonnade in front of the Banias hall overlooks the beautiful Hermon Stream, while the colonnade in front of the Jericho *triclinium* overlooks Wadi Qelt. Finally, the layout of the Banias hall, with its many rock-hewn walls and vast, leveled terrace, suggests that the building was part of a much larger complex.

It seems likely then that the *opus reticulatum* building at Banias was not a temple but rather part of a Herodian palace or royal residence. As such, we would argue that the temple described by Josephus is still awaiting discovery.



ZEV RADOVAN/BIBLELANDPICTURES.COM

THE TRICLINIUM in Herod's Third Palace at Jericho (above) and the Banias hall both are large halls with entryways leading to colonnaded porticoes that overlook flowing streams—the Wadi Qelt at Jericho and the Hermon Stream at Banias. The architectural similarities, along with the new evidence for shared flooring designs, suggest that the *opus reticulatum* building at Banias should be interpreted as part of a palace. Only impressions in the gray plaster floor remain of the *opus sectile* in Herod's *triclinium* at Jericho.

[1] For a detailed discussion, see Rachel Bar-Nathan and Frankie Snyder, "Is the *Opus Reticulatum* Building at Banias a Palace of Herod the Great? New Insights after Analyzing Its *Opus Sectile* Floor," in Orit Peleg-Barkat, Jacob Ashkenazi, Uzi Leibner, Mordechai Aviam, and Rina Talgam, eds., *Between Sea and Desert: On Kings, Nomads, Cities and Monks. Essays in Honor of Joseph Patrich*, Land of Galilee 5 (Tzemach: Kinneret Academic College and Ostracon, 2019), pp. 23–40.

3,000-Year-Old Beauty Secret Revealed

Turquoise — the original fashion icon — comes full circle for an amazing price.

7 carats of genuine turquoise
ONLY $79

B.

A.

Pendant enlarged to show luxurious color

She's been around for thousands of years, but she's never gone out of fashion. We're talking turquoise, one of the world's most ancient gems. Egyptian queens adorned themselves with turquoise jewelry more than 3,000 years ago. And the blue beauty is even more coveted now than she was a millennia ago.

Do you know someone who's even more beautiful now than when you first met? Then the Timeless Turquoise Pendant is for them — a stylish circle formed from seven total carats of natural turquoise and exquisite sterling silver metalwork. And the price? Let's just say we made sure timeless was attainable for less than you'd think.

Time is running out for timeless turquoise. Just because turquoise is timeless, doesn't mean supplies of it will last forever. Turquoise is only found a few places on Earth. Typically unearthed in arid climates like the American Southwest and Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, turquoise requires a delicate balance of minerals and water to achieve its gorgeous range of blues. But even when conditions are optimal for turquoise to form, finding stones of gem-worthy quality is a challenge. There are very few turquoise mines left, and then, less than 5% of turquoise mined worldwide is of jewelry condition, making it rarer to come by than even diamonds.

There are turquoise and sterling silver pendants out there for over $1,200. And while genuine turquoise can garner a pretty penny, there's no reason to be paying a designer price when we can bring you designer pieces for a remarkable price.

100% Satisfaction Guaranteed. Try the Timeless Turquoise Pendant for 30 days. If it fails to delight, just send it back for a refund of the item price.

Limited Availability. These are handcrafted artisan pieces, and we only have so many. Call today.

"...turquoise is becoming rarer and more valuable because less of it is being discovered... the very best turquoise is more valuable than diamonds."

— The Jewellery Editor, 2021

Jewelry Specifications:

- ***Natural turquoise in .925 sterling silver settings***

Timeless Turquoise Collection

A. Pendant (7 ctw) ~~$299†~~	$79 +s&p Save $220
B. 18" 3-Strand Sterling Silver Cable Chain	$89 +s&p
Pendant & Chain ~~$378†~~	$99 +s&p Save $279
C. Earrings (14 ctw) ~~$399†~~	$149 +s&p Save $250
Pendant, Chain & Earrings ~~$777~~	**only $249** +s&p **Best Value!**

† *Special price only for customers using the offer code versus the price on Stauer.com without your offer code.*

C.

Call now and mention the offer code to receive your collecion.

1-800-333-2045

Offer Code TTC210-02

You must use the offer code to get our special price.

ACCREDITED BUSINESS BBB Rating of A+

CONSUMER AFFAIRS ACCREDITED

Stauer®

14101 Southcross Drive W., Ste 155, Dept. TTC210-02,
Burnsville, Minnesota 55337 **www.stauer.com**

Stauer... *Afford the Extraordinary.®*

A Sea Change?

Finding the Biblical Red Sea

BARRY J. BEITZEL

WHERE WAS THE BIBLICAL RED SEA?[1]

This sea—*yam suf* in Hebrew, which literally means "sea of reeds"—features prominently in the Exodus tradition: Moses stretches out his hand, God parts the sea, and the Israelites cross on dry ground—a miraculous escape from the advancing Egyptian army (Exodus 14). But where did the biblical writers believe this crossing took place?

The primary view places the crossing close to Egypt's eastern border, either at the northernmost segment of the Gulf of Suez or perhaps more preferably at one of the ancient marsh-like reedy lakes that separated easternmost Egypt and Sinai (see map). This longstanding and widespread view is rooted in both Jewish and Christian texts from the medieval period and earlier, in early Jewish and Christian maps (some of which date to the 13th century), and in early Christian pilgrimage accounts (going back to the very first pilgrimage record of Egeria, an aristocratic woman from Spain, in c. 382 C.E.).*

A second, more recent view equates the Red (or Reed) Sea—in all 26 of its biblical citations, without exception—with the modern Gulf of Aqaba (or Gulf of Eilat). It situates the Exodus crossing more than 250 miles from Egypt's Delta. This interpretation jettisons established scholarship and the early sources alike.[2]

A precise geographical placement of the tradition of the Exodus crossing is complicated by several factors, including the massive upheaval of terrain occasioned by the Suez Canal's construction in the 19th century and the possible shifting sea level across this lowland through antiquity. Another consideration is the biblical expression *yam suf*. Although it is uniformly employed to identify the event of the Exodus tradition, it also appears in biblical contexts that have nothing to do with the Exodus and, therefore, may not offer direct testimony to the precise placement of that event within the biblical tradition.

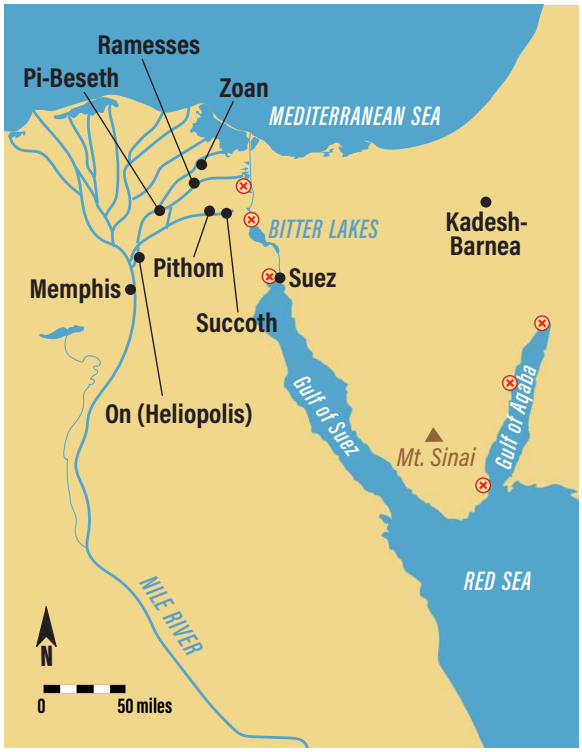
For example, Solomon is said to have

* See Robert L. Wilken, "The Holy Land in Christian Imagination," *Bible Review*, April 1993.

BLACK SEA IMAGES/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

THE GREAT BITTER LAKE, pictured here with a lone fisherman at sunset, is a saltwater lake in Egypt's Suez Canal. Prior to the canal's construction, it was a marshy freshwater lake and a possible setting for the Red Sea crossing.

undertaken a naval adventure to the land of Ophir by constructing a fleet of ships at the site of Ezion-Geber, on the shore of *yam suf* (1 Kings 9:26), which, in context, must identify the modern Gulf of Aqaba.* On the other hand, Yahweh is said to have used a west wind to drive a plague of unwanted locusts from Egypt into *yam suf* (Exodus 10:19), which logically references one of the marshy lakes east of Egypt. Finally, we learn that the Israelites—having been delivered at *yam suf* (Exodus 15:22; Numbers 33:8) and then proceeding farther along their journey—are subsequently said to have "made camp" beside *yam suf* (Numbers 33:10–11). In any scenario (other than a round trip), this must designate a different location than the exact point of the Exodus crossing and, quite likely, a location along the eastern coastal plain of the modern Gulf of Suez, as the story's authors wrote that the Israelites were en route to Mt. Sinai at the time.



RED SEA CROSSINGS. Possible locations of the biblical Exodus event are marked in red.

Whatever the case, to assert that *yam suf*, in all its biblical citations, must designate only one specific and precise piece of geography strains credulity to a breaking point. Accordingly, standard reference tools, scholarly monographs, and commentary literature almost unanimously construe *yam suf* to reference either (1) the Gulf of Aqaba, (2) the Gulf of Suez, or (3) one of the inland marshy lakes separating Egypt and the Sinai—depending on context.

The notion of a biblical toponym referencing multiple locations has long been recognized as axiomatic in the discipline of historical geography, and it is by no means unique or unusual with *yam suf*. This kind of homonymy normally occurs because biblical place names tend to be generic in meaning, often composed of a common geographical, spatial, or divine element.

For example, Bethel means "a house of God," Gibeah "a hill," Gilgal "a circle (of stones)," Socoh "a thorny place," Ain (or En) "a spring," Migdal (or Migdol) "a tower (or fortress)," Ramah "a hill (or high place)," and so forth. It is not surprising that these geographical names—and arguably 150–200 more in the Bible—are each used to designate more than one location. There appear to be as many as seven different locations named Kadesh (or Kedesh, "a sanctuary"), five distinct locations named Mizpah ("a watchtower"), and four separate locations named Aphek ("a fortress"). This sort of homonymy is not limited to the Bible. Egyptian and Assyrian literature, for example, attests to at least seven different sites in Canaan known as Abel ("a meadow or grazing spot").[3]

Beyond the varied use of *yam suf* in the Hebrew Bible, a similar homonymy also appears in early Greek and Latin translations of the biblical text, the third-century B.C.E. Septuagint and the fourth-century C.E. Vulgate, respectively. In the Septuagint, *yam suf* is translated as *erythra thalassa* ("Red Sea"); its Latin equivalent is *mare rubrum*. *Erythra thalassa* and *mare rubrum* appear more than 800 times in classical literature as a homonym referencing any one of seven distinct bodies of water: the Bay of Bengal, Indian Ocean, Persian Gulf, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Arabia (modern Red Sea), Gulf of Heroonpolis (Gulf of Suez), and Gulf of Aelanites (Gulf of Aqaba). Sometimes it simply references nearby water. The pattern of homonymy with Hebrew *yam suf*—and the way that expression was conceptually understood—was naturally carried forward into the classical era.

Given this historical and cultural context, the biblical Red Sea should not be identified exclusively with the Gulf of Aqaba. Readers and scholars alike need to take cues from the biblical text to understand the sea's identity and location on a case-by-case basis. Although it may never be known exactly where the biblical writers understood the Exodus crossing to have taken place, it is better situated on Egypt's eastern border—either at the Gulf of Suez or one of the reedy lakes that separated Egypt from Sinai. This traditional interpretation remains the best.

* Gary D. Pratico, "Where Is Ezion-Geber? A Reappraisal of the Site Archaeologist Nelson Glueck Identified as King Solomon's Red Sea Port," **BAR**, September/October 1986.

[1] This piece grows out of my recent publication, *Where Was the Biblical Red Sea? Examining the Ancient Evidence* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020). In that volume, I provide exegetical, geographical, classical, and early cartographical evidence to undergird the traditional identification of the Red Sea.

[2] See, e.g., Duane A. Garrett, *A Commentary on Exodus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2014), p. 120; Glen A. Fritz, *The Lost Sea of the Exodus* (San Antonio: GeoTech, 2016), p. 7; Colin J. Humphreys, *The Miracles of Exodus* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2003).

[3] See, e.g., Shmuel Aḥituv, *Canaanite Toponyms in Ancient Egyptian Documents* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1984), pp. 45–47; Ariel M. Bagg, *Répertoire Géographique des Textes Cunéiformes: Die Orts- und Gewässernamen der Neuassyrischen Zeit*, TAVO 7.1 (Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert, 2007), pp. 293–299.

Paul on the Resurrection

BEN WITHERINGTON III

HISTORY AND ART COLLECTION/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

THIS ICON depicts the Second Coming of Jesus, which many Christians believe will usher in bodily resurrection for the faithful. Angels and saints encircle Jesus. Paradise appears at the bottom of the scene, with Abraham's Bosom on the left and the Good Thief (more accurately, bandit) on the right. The icon comes from Greece and dates to c. 1700.

IT WAS AN UPHILL CLIMB FOR PAUL to be accepted by the Jerusalem church, not least because of two things: (1) As a representative of the Jewish authorities, he had persecuted the church; and (2) he had not seen the risen Lord during the 40-day period the early reports say that Jesus appeared not only to his disciples, but also to nondisciples, such as his brother James and apparently other family members (see Acts 1:14). Furthermore, his claim to have seen the risen Lord on his way to Damascus in some sort of vision, which completely changed his views on Jesus and his followers, could not be independently verified by the Jerusalem church. But perhaps Paul's changed behavior and professions of faith were the proof.

For this and other reasons, there were and still are many questions as to what one should make of what Paul says about resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15, a passage that is chronologically the earliest discussion of Jesus's resurrection in the New Testament. As such it is crucial to understanding how early Jewish Christians understood the matter.

First, we know that Pharisees—including Paul, as a former Pharisee—did indeed believe in bodily resurrection as the form of future afterlife.* This was based in part on a certain understanding of Daniel 12:1–3 and the development of thought that ensued from reflection on that text in subsequent centuries. It should be noted, however, that Daniel 12 is about a collective resurrection of the righteous (and, separately, the

* See Bernhard Lang, "Afterlife: Ancient Israel's Changing Vision of the World Beyond," *Bible Review*, February 1988.

unrighteous) and not about the resurrection of an individual, much less the resurrection of the messiah, which early Jews were not anticipating. They did not read the prophets as foreseeing that particular event.

Second, and importantly, there is the issue of Paul's Greek phrase *pneumatikon soma*, which parallels the phrase *psychikon soma* in 1 Corinthians 15:44. The NRSV translation of that verse reads, "It is sown a physical body [*psychikon soma*], it is raised a spiritual body [*pneumatikon soma*]. If there is a physical body [*psychikon soma*], there is also a spiritual body [*pneumatikon soma*]."

Is *pneumatikon soma* rightly translated "a spiritual body"? But what would that mean—a nonmaterial body? That would seem to be an oxymoron for a former Pharisee like Paul. And if that were the right rendering, that would mean that *psychikon soma* means "a soulish body." But translators have realized that simply can't be the meaning. Paul is contrasting the making of the first human, Adam, by God breathing life into him, with the condition of the last Adam, Jesus, who was raised from the dead (the phrase in the Greek is even more graphic—"raised from out of the dead ones," not merely "raised from death").

And here is where Greek grammar and vocabulary matter. Paul is saying that Adam's body was animated by life-breath *(psyche* meaning "life-breath," the animating principle, not "soul"). He contrasts this with how the risen body of Jesus was animated by the Spirit. In other words, the phrase *pneumatikon soma* does not mean, and indeed cannot mean, a body made out of nonmaterial stuff (whatever that would be). No, he means a body totally energized, empowered, and given life by God's Spirit. This is precisely why he says that the merely mortal body must be replaced by one that will endure forever, a body permanently alive and energized by God's Spirit—immune to disease, decay, and death, so death can have no more victory over it. This is also why Paul says that flesh and blood, in its merely mortal state, cannot inherit God's kingdom. Everyone must experience bodily change to enter that kingdom.

Finally, Paul is not talking about life without a body in heaven in this passage (see 2 Corinthians 5:1–10). He sees that as a temporary expedient until Jesus returns: "to be absent from the body and present with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8). For Paul, the final form of afterlife involves life right here on earth in resurrected bodies when the kingdom comes and God's will is finally done in the new creation on earth, as it is in heaven. Then the perishable will be swallowed up by the imperishable, and what Paul calls the new Jerusalem will come on earth with the return of Jesus, through a corporate merger of heaven and earth (see Galatians 4:26).

This is quite a vision of the future, such that Easter is not seen as a one-off event in human history. No, Paul views Jesus's history as the Christian's destiny, or as he puts it—Jesus is just the firstfruits of the resurrection. It is the harbinger of a bumper crop later.[1]

[1] On all of this, see my commentary on Corinthians titled *Conflict and Community in Corinth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995).

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Pontius Pilate/Pilatus

Pontos = "sea" | *pontios* = "of the sea" |
pilum = "javelin" | *pilatus* = "armed with a javelin"

Pontius Pilate was the Roman prefect of Judea (26–36 C.E.) who presided at the trial of Jesus. In his native Latin, the name was spelled Pontius Pilatus. The Greek form, attested in the New Testament (Luke 3:1; Acts 4:27), reads Pontios Pilatos (Πόντιος Πιλᾶτος). English translations preserve the Latin form in Pontius but transform Pilatus into Pilate. In the Roman system of names, Pontius was a tribal name (*nomen gentilicium*) that identified a person with a specific tribe or extended family (Latin: *gens*) and was thus hereditary. It derives from the Greek word for sea (*pontos*) and means "belonging to the sea" or "of the (high) sea."

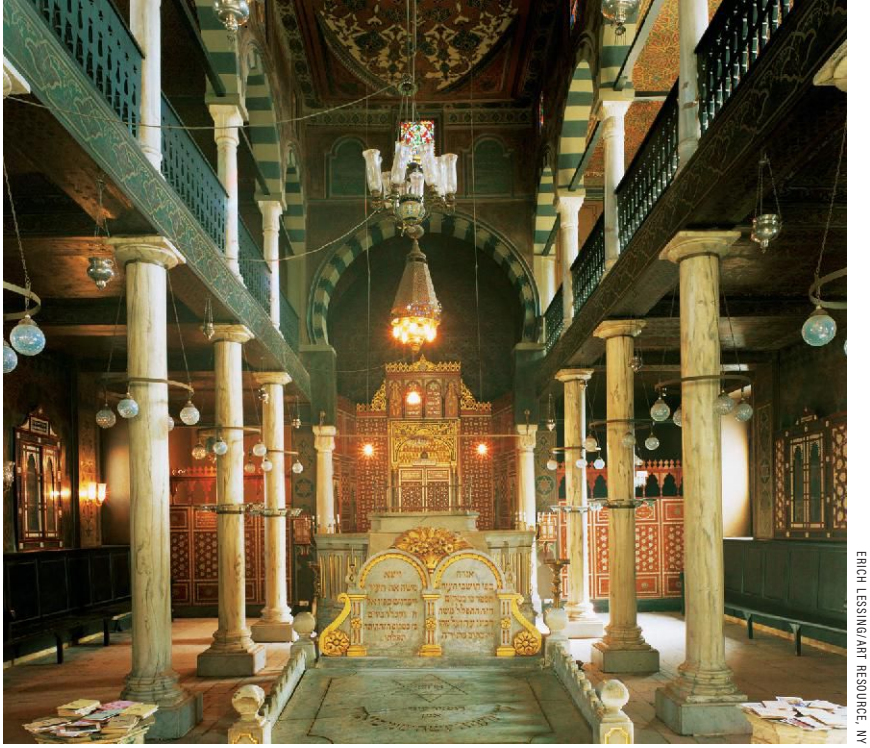
Pilatus is an adjective derived from the Latin word for javelin, *pilum*. It means either "skilled with the javelin" or "armed with a javelin." According to Roman naming conventions, this was his third name (*cognomen*), used to distinguish individual families of the tribe or to highlight a person's achievement—especially a military one, as might be the case. Together with the first name (*praenomen*), which is not attested for Pontius Pilate, a *cognomen* was the most common mode of identifying someone's name in normal, everyday communication. Accordingly, the gospel narratives call him simply Pilate, as does the Roman historian Josephus.

PILATE STONE. This first-century inscription from Caesarea Maritima identifies Pontius Pilate as the Roman prefect of Judea.

COLLECTION OF THE ISRAEL ANTIQUITIES AUTHORITY PHOTO © THE ISRAEL MUSEUM, JERUSALEM

Cairo Geniza

Synagogue Stash of Medieval Jewish Manuscripts



ERICH LESSING/ART RESOURCE, NY

The Ben Ezra Synagogue in Old Cairo harbored a millennium-worth of Jewish writings.

THE CAIRO GENIZA refers to the cache of about 300,000 documents found in the attic storeroom of the Ben Ezra Synagogue, located in Fustat (in Old Cairo), the capital city of Egypt during the seventh–tenth centuries C.E. The creation and preservation of the Cairo Geniza owes to the long-lived Jewish habit of consigning disused texts in Hebrew script to a slow decay in dignified limbo, safe from profanation, rather than casually destroying them through dumping. Not a curated collection or archive arranged for storage and retrieval, the Cairo Geniza is thus an accidental mass of dead writings piled up much like archaeological strata. The Hebrew word *geniza* signifies "hiding place."

The storeroom—accessible only by ladder from the women's balcony of the synagogue—was never really forgotten, so we are perhaps unjustified in talking about its discovery. **Starting in** the 1880s, however, scholars from Jerusalem, England, and elsewhere learned of the existence of the documents and thus began to empty the storeroom of some of its contents. Among the early visitors were the Scottish twin sisters Agnes Smith Lewis and Margaret Dunlop Gibson, who upon their return to Cambridge, in 1896, showed their documents to the great scholar of Jewish studies, Solomon Schechter. The documents included a page of the Hebrew original of the book of Ben Sira and inspired Schechter to travel to Cairo. With permission of the rabbi of the synagogue, Refael Aharon Ben-Shimon, himself an important scholar, Schechter was able to remove the remaining contents of the Cairo Geniza.*

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, T-S AR.41.131

Built between 1025 and 1041, the Ben Ezra Synagogue served the local community for more than 900 years—thus explaining the enormous volume of accumulated writings—until it was decommissioned during the 1960s.** The survival of the documents owes to the fortunate confluence of multiple factors, including favorable climate with stable humidity levels; the omnipresent dust from local limestone containing high levels of calcium carbonate, which naturally aids the preservation of paper, parchment, and ink; and the fact that the storeroom was apparently large enough that it never needed to be emptied.

The text treasures of the Cairo Geniza cover more than a millennium of history. While the latest documents date from the 19th century, the earliest recovered writings predate the founding of the synagogue by centuries. This is due to the practice of repurposing old documents (often as palimpsests) and because sturdy parchment Torah scrolls may be used for centuries and, in the present instance, clearly were transferred from an older synagogue to the then newly built Ben Ezra. Dating as far back as the fifth or sixth century, the earliest writings in the geniza survived because they were reused as scrap paper to record new texts.

No other geniza or archive (ancient or medieval) can compare in size and diversity to the Cairo Geniza. Only the Oxyrhynchus Papyri—a monumental collection of papyri dated to the Greco-Roman period from the Egyptian city of Oxyrhynchus—comes close,

* See Molly Dewsnap Meinhardt, "The Twins and the Scholar," **BAR**, September/October 1996.

** You can tour the synagogue here: https://bit.ly/2lErBv1.

with 86 volumes of edited texts published so far. The largest single grouping of Geniza documents is now in the Cambridge University Library. With its approximately 200,000 documents, it is also the world's largest collection of medieval Jewish manuscripts. The remaining documents are held in about 70 different museums, libraries, and private collections around the world.

The Cairo Geniza is unique also in that it contains much more than the usual sacred Hebrew books, such as biblical and Talmudic texts, prayer books, and compendia of Jewish law. For some reason, the Jews of Cairo also kept writings from many secular genres (grammar, lexicography, poetry, philosophy, etc.) as well as quotidian and ephemeral documents, such as receipts, medical prescriptions, recipes, marriage contracts, leases, private letters, and school writing exercises. Besides texts in Hebrew, the cache contains writings in Aramaic, Judeo-Arabic, Judeo-Greek, Judeo-Spanish, Judeo-Persian, Judeo-German (Yiddish), Greek, and Arabic. The polyglot documentation indicates the Cairo community's contacts with other Jewish communities around the world.

Writings recovered from the Cairo Geniza offer a window on the Jewish community of medieval and early modern Cairo but also the wider economic, social, and cultural history of the Mediterranean world. They bring to life Jewish customs and daily concerns of a minority living under the rule of Muslim dynasties. A sizable number of the palimpsests astonishingly include Arabic documents that emanated from the state administration of the Fatimid rulers of Egypt (969–1171) and allow an unparalleled view of the early Islamic state. The example on the opposite page shows 13 lines of an Arabic petition concerning land, from c. 1150 C.E., which was later reused to write down Jewish liturgical poems called *piyyutim*, in Hebrew.

There is no single publication series working toward a complete edition or translation of the Geniza documents. The sheer magnitude and diversity of the corpus favor discrete linguistically and subject-focused projects. Several digital initiatives provide access to the myriad of dispersed fragments and facilitate their identification, cataloging, transcription, and translation. They include the Friedberg Genizah Project, the Taylor-Schechter Genizah Research Unit at Cambridge University Library, Princeton Geniza Project, and Penn/Cambridge Genizah Fragment Project. Stefan Reif's *A Jewish Archive from Old Cairo: The History of Cambridge University's Genizah Collection* (Routledge, 2000) and *Sacred Trash: The Lost and Found World of the Cairo Geniza*, by Adina Hoffman and Peter Cole (Schocken, 2011), provide accessible introductions. You can also watch Michelle Paymar's 2018 documentary *From Cairo to the Cloud: The World of the Cairo Geniza*.—**M.D.**

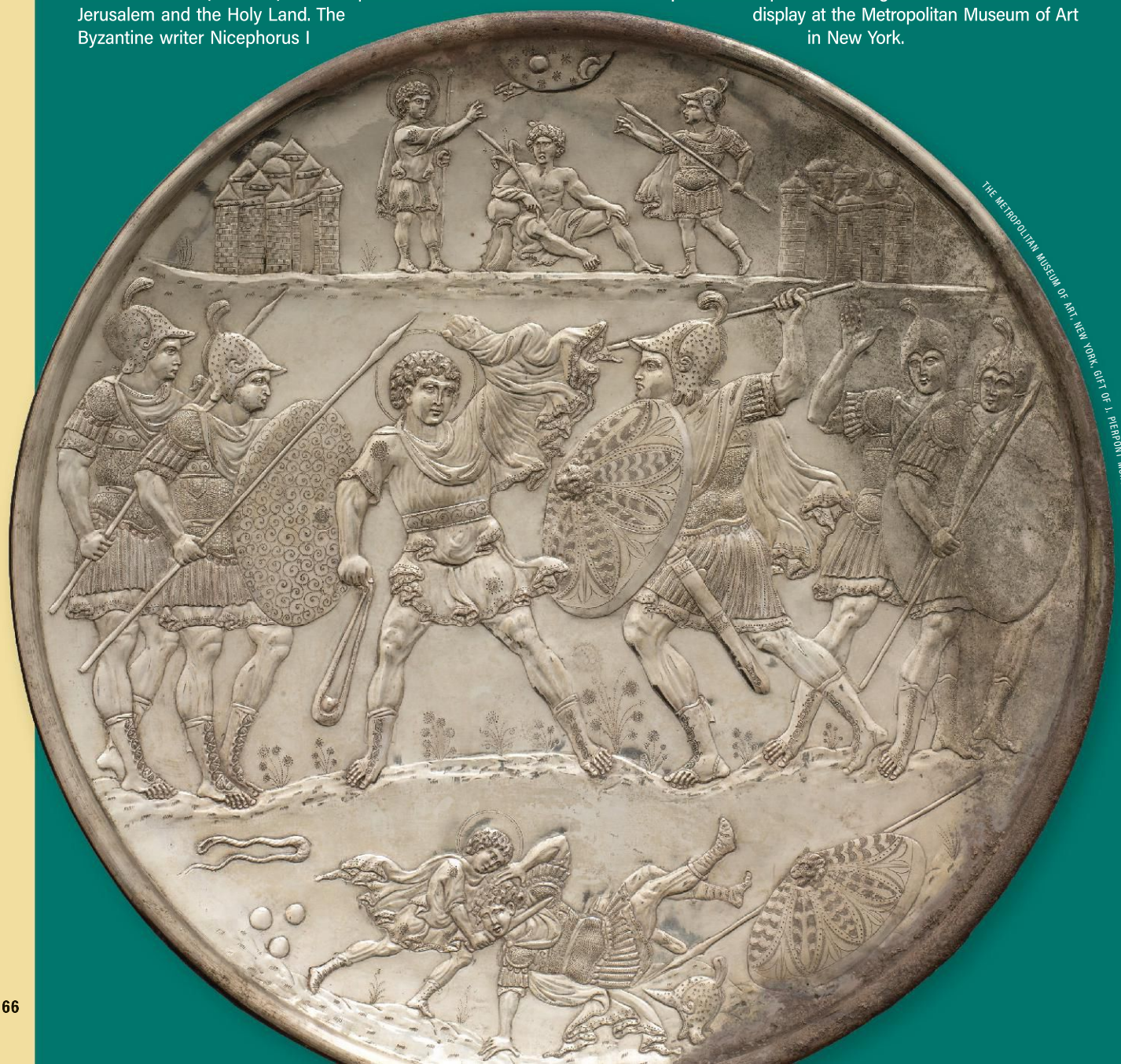
Plate with the Battle of David and Goliath

This silver plate depicts the biblical battle between David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17), with the story progressing from top to bottom. The top register shows David confront the Philistine champion. Between them sits a personification of the river that provides David stones for his sling. God's hand reaches down from the heavens, representing his protection over David, who also appears with a halo. In the middle register, the battle appears, from which David and the Israelites emerge victorious. After hitting Goliath in the forehead with a stone from his sling, David beheads the giant—with Goliath's own sword—in the bottom register.

Made in the capital city of Constantinople (modern Istanbul), the plate dates to c. 630 C.E., during the reign of the Byzantine emperor Heraclius, who had just won a war with Persia (602–628) and recaptured Jerusalem and the Holy Land. The Byzantine writer Nicephorus I of Constantinople recounts that Heraclius and the Persian general Razatis fought each other in single combat, and Heraclius won with one thrust. His victory parallels the biblical episode of David and Goliath.

This plate, along with eight others depicting scenes from King David's early life, was found in Karavas, Northern Cyprus, in 1902. Such elaborate dishes would have been used as display pieces or in banquets, common in late Roman and early Byzantine society. Interestingly, this set of plates might be the earliest to depict biblical scenes. The figures on the plate appear in contemporary Byzantine dress, and the overall iconography owes to the depictions of the heroes of classical mythology.

Measuring 20 inches in diameter and weighing nearly 13 pounds, this plate is the largest of the set. It is on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.



THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK. GIFT OF J. PIERPONT MORGAN, 1917. WWW.METMUSEUM.ORG

NEW

RECHARGEABLE Digital Hearing Aid

BUY 1 GET 1 FREE

Reg: ~~$599.98~~

Only $299.99

Each When You Buy a Pair – ***LIMITED TIME ONLY!***

How can a rechargeable hearing aid that costs only $299.99 be every bit as good as one that sells for $2,400 or more?

The answer: Although tremendous strides have been made in Hearing Aid Technology, those cost reductions have not been passed on to you. Until now...

The MDHearingAid® VOLT+ uses the same kind of technology incorporated into hearing aids that cost thousands more at a small fraction of the price.

Over 600,000 satisfied MDHearingAid customers agree: High-quality, FDA-registered rechargeable hearing aids don't have to cost a fortune. MDHearingAid is a medical-grade, digital, rechargeable hearing aid offering sophistication and high performance; and works right out of the box with no time-consuming "adjustment" appointments. Now that you know... why pay more?

"I was amazed! Sounds I hadn't heard in years came back to me!"

— Don W., Sherman, TX

CHARGE AT NIGHT AND GO ALL DAY

Never Change a Battery Again!

30-Hour Battery Life

Water Resistant to 3 Feet

A+ BBB rating for 10+ years

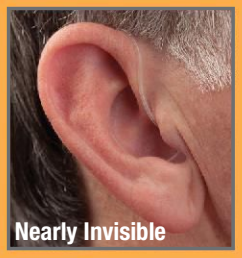
45-DAY RISK-FREE TRIAL!

If you are not completely satisfied with your MDHearingAids, return them within 45 days for a FULL REFUND!

For the Lowest Price Call

1-800-964-8415

www.MDVolt.com



Limited-Time FREE BONUS OFFER

– $150 Value –

Extra Charging Case*

Dehumidifier Jar

Tube & Tip Replacement Kit

*Extra charging case does not include additional hearing aids.

Use Code SQ41 to get FREE Shipping & Accessories

MDHearingAid®

DOCTOR DESIGNED | AUDIOLOGIST TESTED | FDA REGISTERED

Ahmad Al-Jallad (p. 40) is Professor of Arabic Studies at The Ohio State University. He focuses on the languages and writing systems of pre-Islamic Arabia and the ancient Near East.

Rachel Bar-Nathan (p. 52) is a senior archaeologist with the Israel Antiquities Authority. She was the assistant to Ehud Netzer at his excavations of the Herodian sites of Banias, Jericho, Herodium, Cypros, and Quarantal.

Barry J. Beitzel (p. 60) is Professor Emeritus of Old Testament and Semitic Languages at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He wrote *Where Was the Biblical Red Sea? Examining the Ancient Evidence* (2020).

Tim Frank (p. 47) is the Vicar of Papanui, New Zealand. His main interest is household archaeology of ancient Israel. He recently authored *Household Food Storage in Ancient Israel and Judah* (2018). He is part of the Lahav Research Project, conducting archaeological excavations at Tel Halif in Israel.

Yosef Garfinkel (p. 17) is the Yigael Yadin Chair in Archaeology of Israel at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He directs excavations at Tel Lachish and Khirbet al-Raʿi—in addition to publishing the Khirbet Qeiyafa excavations.

Aren M. Maeir (p. 26) is Professor of Archaeology at Bar-Ilan University in Israel. He directs the Tell es-Safi/Gath Archaeological Project, which is processing and publishing its discoveries.

Daniel M. Master (p. 30) is Professor of Archaeology at Wheaton College and Co-Director of the Tel Shimron Excavations. He also directs the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon, which is working toward publication of its findings.

Allison Mickel (p. 18) is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Lehigh University. Her research focuses on anthropological aspects of archaeological work in the Middle East, specifically the role of local workers employed on archaeological projects.

Frankie Snyder (p. 52) is a mathematician whose fascination with geometry has led her to become a specialist in analyzing ancient *opus sectile* floors.

Ben Witherington III (p. 62) is the Amos Professor of New Testament for Doctoral Studies at Asbury Theological Seminary and on the doctoral faculty at St. Andrews University in Scotland.

JUST RELEASED!

LOW AS $36.50 each

Actual size is 40.6 mm

World's Most Popular Silver Coin

Demand for Silver Is Strong. Get Your 2022 Silver Eagles!

The Most Important Coin in the Modern Era

When President Ronald Reagan signed the Liberty Coin Act into law, he didn't know American Eagles would have the impact they've had, year after year. The coins were so popular that between 1986 and 2021, over 561 million were struck. That's more than HALF A BILLION coins, easily making Silver Eagles the most widely-collected, best-selling bullion coins in the world.

Each year, millions of collectors and silver stackers around the word secure freshly struck American Eagle Silver Dollars. Minted in one Troy ounce of 99.9% pure U.S. silver, these legal-tender coins are hugely popular now, but may soon become even more popular! Keep reading to find out why.

Higher Values + Slowed Production = DEMAND!

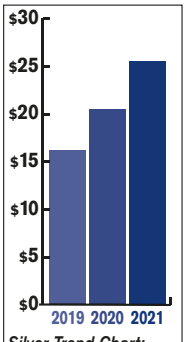
Over the last three years, average monthly values of silver bullion have increased nearly 57%! At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the U.S. Mint slowing production of freshly struck Silver Eagles and using branch mints to help increase supply, but only in limited quantities.

What This Means for You

Silver values are up, and silver is in high demand in the marketplace. In addition, many experts believe that the price of silver could continue to increase in the next 12 to 24 months. And while no one can accurately predict the future, there are two questions you should be asking yourself right now:

1) Do I own enough physical silver?

2) Which silver coins are right for me?



Silver Trend Chart: Price per ounce based on yearly averages.

Guaranteed By the U.S. Government

These 2022 Silver Eagles have just been released by the U.S. Mint. They are guaranteed for weight and fineness by the U.S. government. They're the world's most liquid and secure one-ounce silver coins. They're also recognized around the world, making them easier to sell when the time is right if you make that decision in the future. Silver Eagles are the safest way to buy silver—period!

Don't Wait — NOW Is the Time to Buy!

Last year, when the new design first became available, demand was high, and many paid a premium for Silver Eagles. Call now to lock in our low prices, and your 2022 U.S. Silver Dollars will ship directly to your door. Don't pay more for the 99.9% fine silver you want for you and your family. The more you buy, the more you save, plus receive a FREE U.S. Mint Tube when you buy 20 or more.

2022 American Eagle Silver Dollar

1-3 Coins-	$37.95 ea. + *s/h*
4-9 Coins-	$37.50 ea. + ***FREE SHIPPING***
10-19 Coins-	$37.25 ea. + ***FREE SHIPPING***
20-49 Coins-	$36.95 ea. + ***FREE SHIPPING***
50+ Coins-	$36.50 ea. + ***FREE SHIPPING***

FREE SHIPPING on 4 or More!

Limited time only. Product total over $149 before taxes (if any). Standard domestic shipping only. Not valid on previous purchases.

Call today toll-free for fastest service

1-888-201-7639

Offer Code SRE202-01

Please mention this code when you call.

Prices subject to change due to market fluctuations. Call NOW for the best price!

GovMint.com · 1300 Corporate Center Curve, Dept. SRE202-01, Eagan, MN 55121

SPECIAL CALL-IN ONLY OFFER

ERIC CARLSON

"And you called me an ass!"

VERNON MOYER
HICKORY, NORTH CAROLINA

Thank you to all those who submitted caption entries for our Fall 2021 cartoon (left), based on Numbers 22:27–28. We are pleased to congratulate Vernon Moyer of Hickory, North Carolina, who wrote the winning caption, and our runners-up:

RUNNERS-UP

"If you kick my seat one more time, you will see more than one angel."

LIZ ANCIAUX
MARION, IOWA

"I am so done with you! Call a camel!"

SUZANNE LINCH
WESTERVILLE, OHIO

HONORABLE MENTIONS

"AETA (Angels for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) will hear of this!"

FERNANDO ATIENZA
WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA

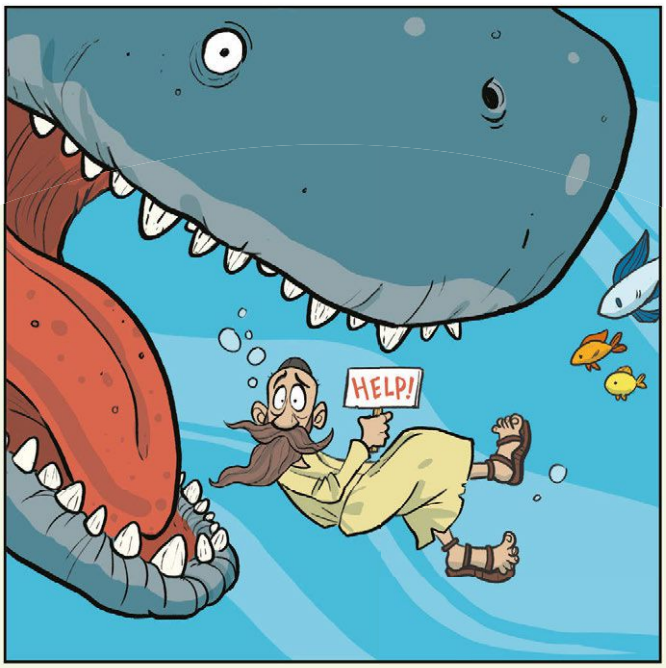
"They call me a beast of burden, but you're a beast and a burden!"

WILLIAM MOORE
WHITING, NEW JERSEY

For additional caption entries, as well as past cartoons and captions, please visit **biblicalarchaeology.org/captioncontest**.

Write a caption for the cartoon (right) based on Jonah 1:17: "But the Lord provided a large fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights." Submit it via our website at **biblicalarchaeology.org/captioncontest.**

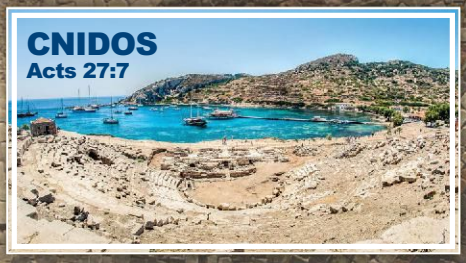
Please include your name and address. The deadline for entries is May 15, 2022. The author of the winning caption will receive a BAS All-Access membership and three gift subscriptions to give **BAR** to friends. Runners-up will receive an All-Access membership and two gift subscriptions for friends.



ERIC CARLSON

Jonah 1:17

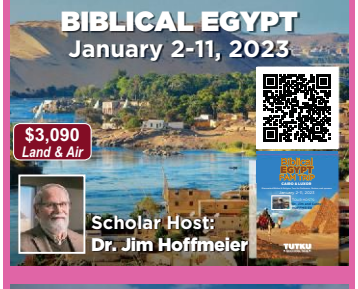
TUTKU RECOMMENDED TOURS

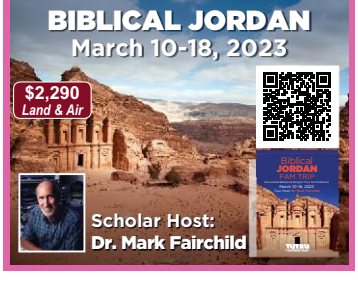


The learning experience of these scholar-led tours is more significant than with a regular tour group

DISCOUNTED FAM TRIPS FOR FACULTY & PASTORS

EL AL · UNITED · Lufthansa · DELTA · TURKISH AIRLINES





TUTKU
— EDUCATIONAL TRAVEL —

BIBLE LANDS TUTKU

FOR ALL QUESTIONS & REGISTRATION:
info@tutkutours.com • www.tutkutours.com

"Christianbook is the first place I go to find ministry tools. Actually... it's the only place."

It's little wonder why so many pastors, teachers, and study group leaders are loyal customers of Christianbook. With just a click, they can browse the web's largest selection of Christian books, Bibles, commentaries, reference tools, pastoral resources, study guides, and more—all in one place. And always at the best value. Visit today and see for yourself. If you're looking for ministry tools, you'll find them here.

Christianbook

Christianbook.com
1-800-CHRISTIAN
Everything Christian for less!